

HARI SINGH

The Maharaja, The Man, The Times

Somnath Wakhlu



A Biography of Maharaja Hari Singh
of Jammu and Kashmir State

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This is the first comprehensive, detailed and bold biography of Maharaja Hari Singh of Jammu and Kashmir.

This authoritative and uniquely insightful biography explores the fascinating public and private life of this man of character in all its human complexity. He compels our admiration because even in the turbulent decades, he enthusiastically enough streamlined the whole government set-up, cleared the aegean stables and brought improvement in all other aspects in the State of Jammu and Kashmir.

Maharaja Hari Singh's reign is termed as an Age of Reformation, for he brought about a cataclysmic reform in the society, surpassing even the great reformers of India. He loved his people of all sects and creeds and was loved by them.

Maharaja Hari Singh's life reads like a Greek tragedy besieged by outer and inner conflicts. No doubt, he was not assassinated directly like Caesar by the conspirators but he was injured and humiliated, harassed and abused and made to abdicate unceremoniously and forced to leave his home and hearth in a shabby manner, never to return.

The book is vivid, penetrating and wholly absorbing to look at the two protagonists—Maharaja and the Sheikh and the horrors and miseries of the people. There are many characters who have been delineated with skill. All the characters and events appear alive.

The turbulent and strife-torn times in Jammu and Kashmir's history are narrated with vividness.

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A Biography of Maharaja Hari Singh of
Jammu and Kashmir State (1895-1961)

Prof. Somnath Wakhlu



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Dedicated To

My saintly parents

*Late Shri Tika Lal Wakhlu and Smt. Tara Devi
both of whom have moulded my character.*

*Late Shrimati Prabha Devi Wakhlu, my wife, who
inspired me and whose life was a story of great
service and sacrifice for me and my parents and my
grandchildren—Deepak Vakhlu (Wakhlu), Jyoti Vakhlu
and Master Kunla Kothidar
who are my hope.*

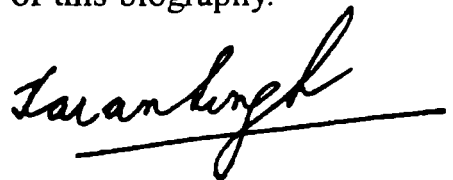
Foreword

My father Maharaja Hari Singh was a much misunderstood man. Despite being an enlightened and progressive ruler who initiated many social reform measures such as throwing temples open to Harijans long before this happened in other parts of India, he never received sufficient credit for this. Unfortunately, the last few years of his rule were vitiated on the one hand by the virulent anti- Dogra campaign launched by Sheikh Abdullah and his party, and on the other by the vast historical forces that were released in the run up to partition and during partition itself. I do not intend to recapitulate that story about which hundreds of books have already been written.

During the birth centenary celebrations of my father in 1995, a book was published containing essays by eminent historians. What Prof. Somnath Wakhlu has now done is to give us an intensive account of Maharaja Hari Singh's life and his rule from 1925 to 1949, including many lesser-known details of the administrative system and political developments during this period. He has carried the story up to 1961 when my father passed away, virtually in exile in Bombay.

In my Autobiography, I have recounted from my own point of view many of the events that Prof. Wakhlu has covered in his book. He was for many years Librarian-cum-Curator of the Amar Mahal Museum and Library that my wife and I established in Jammu in 1975 and that has grown into a repository of over 25,000 books, priceless Pahari paintings, a portrait gallery and a collection of modern art. The solid gold throne used by my father for formal durbars pictured on the back cover of this book is also displayed there.

Prof. Wakhlu deserves to be congratulated for producing a book which will fill a gaping void in the recent history of Jammu & Kashmir. He has done so with great devotion and extensive research, which are commendable. Perhaps for the first time a composite picture of my father will emerge from the pages of this biography.



Karan Singh

New Delhi
20 June, 2004

Preface

This is the first comprehensive, detailed and bold biography of Maharaja Hari Singh. Barring a few books which are desultory, fragmentary and incomplete, all other writers have given malicious account of the man and his rule, as if true to Shakespeare's words :

*“The evil that men do lives after them
The good is oft interred with their bones.”*

This authoritative and uniquely insightful biography explores the fascinating public and private life of this man of character in all its human complexity. He deserves our admiration because even in the turbulent decades, he enthusiastically enough streamlined the whole government set-up, cleared the aegean stables and brought improvement in all other aspects.

Maharaja Hari Singh's reign is termed as an Age of Reformation, for he brought about a cataclysmic reform in the society, surpassing even the great reformers of India. He loved his people of all sects and creeds and was loved by them. He modernised the State and metalled the two long trunk roads, viz., J.V. Road and Banihal Cart Road and this enabled the visitors throng to the State bringing money which in turn brought prosperity to the State. Full details of his achievements have been given in the book.

Maharaja Hari Singh's life reads like a Greek tragedy besieged by outer and inner conflicts. No doubt, he was not assassinated directly like Caesar by the conspirators but he was injured and humiliated, harassed and abused and made to abdicate unceremoniously and forced to leave his home and hearth in a shabby manner, never to return. This told upon his health and depressed him fatally. His diabetes trouble galloped on and later due to constant tension he succumbed to the heart trouble and thus he was indirectly and subtly,

killed like slow poison. It is essentially a tale of suffering and calamity conducting to death.

It is not overstepping the bounds of historical, literary and psychological probability when we say that Maharaja Hari Singh was a tragic hero as defined by Aristotle : "A man essentially good and just yet whose misfortune is brought by some frailty." Maharaja Hari Singh had no vice, he had a remarkable humanism and innate sense of justice; he had no aberration like other princes who maintained a large harem of concubines, courtesans and mistresses.

His frailty which emerges from his own nature was his impulsive anger, pride, stubbornness and obsession with royal dignity. He did not know to forgive and forget.

In this book, I have tried to give a graphic account of the Pakistani tribal raid and the heroic fight of Brig. Rajinder Singh and his brave men and many bold soldiers of the Indian army. The debates in the Security Council are briefly given to show that Maharaja Hari Singh was right to consider India's complaint to the United Nations on the persuasion of Lord Mountbatten, as a blunder and to accept the ceasefire all the more stupid, when the Indian army could with one thrust have driven out the Pakistani army. He thought it liked robber entering your house and you pleasantly handing over a portion of it. Thus, the Kashmir problem still goes on.

At the death of Maharaja Hari Singh, Sheikh Abdullah remorsefully commented that Maharaja Hari Singh was *Khuddar* (self-respecting man) and quoted Iqbal's verse :

*Khudi ko kar buland itna
Ki har taqdir se pehle
Khuda bande se khud pooche
Bata teri raza kya hai.*

*[Let your self-respect grow so high
That before the Moving Finger writes your fate
May ask the devotee
What is your desire?]*

It is hoped that this biography of Maharaja Hari Singh will be read with great interest.

Acknowledgements

I am indebted in some measure to the authors of all the books named in the bibliography and, in particular, owe intense gratitude to Dr. Karan Singh Ji for his "Autobiography" and indispensable history books of Mr. P.N.K. Bamzai and Mr. A.P. Jain, which I have quoted at many places in the book. I drew much information from "Freedom at Midnight" by Laprie and Collins and "History of Srinagar" by Dr. Ishaq Khan for which I feel very grateful to them.

I am highly thankful to my son, Dr. Vijay Kumar Vakhlu and his wife, Mrs. Rekha Vakhlu for their encouragement. I am also grateful to my son-in-law, Mr. Ashok Kothidar and grandson-in-law, Dr. Sanjeev Bhat for their love and sympathy and their interest in my venture.

I am obliged to Dr. N.S. Pathania, Dr. K.L. Choudhary, Dr. Shiban Razdan and Dr. Yudhvir Katoch. They kept me live for all these years. Without their sincere help, I could not have written this book.

I am extremely thankful to Capt. Dewan Singh, former A.D.C. to Maharaja Hari Singh Ji, Padam Shri Prof. Ram Nath Shastri, Dr. Ashok Jerath, Dr. Jatendar Udhamपुरi, Milap Chand and Dr. A.K. Dhar who have always admired my writings and thus encouraged me to write this book. Dr. D.C. Sharma's critical articles proved very useful to me.

Last but not the least, I am grateful to the multitude of people who imparted me some knowledge about Maharaja Hari Singh Ji. In fact, Shree D.C. Prashant, former M.P. proved very helpful to me.

—AUTHOR

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Introduction

It was the winter season and there was cold nip in the air. In the starry night, the full moon was shining brightly in the sky and the road looked like a pale ribbon of moonlight winding up the Banihal hill, which separates Jammu from Kashmir. A black Rolls-Royce was going fast up the hill. The occupant was His Highness Maharaja Hari Singh, who was going to Srinagar for duck shooting, of which he was very fond of. But the road was blocked by a herd of cattle driven by an old venerable-looking Gujjar, who was trying his best to keep the brutes on one side of the road to enable the car to pass on. The Maharaja was growing impatient and then his A.D.C., who was accompanying him in the car, came out and abused the Gujjar, whose face thereupon became red with rage and he exclaimed : “If my Sarkar were to know of your supercilious demeanour, he would thrash you soundly.”

The Maharaja came out of the car and told the Gujjar that he was his Sarkar and shook hands with him. He then ordered the A.D.C. to beg his pardon and give him some money. “Maharaja Bahadur Zindabad”, cried the Gujjar.

The story is apocryphal but is still told with aplomb by many persons of the old generation of the State. After many years of Maharaja Hari Singh’s demise, the people of Kashmir still respect and have deep confidence in his son, Dr. Karan Singh. Here is an example. On December 28, 1949, the holy relic of Prophet

Mohammad—a hair from his beard—was found missing at the Hazratbal Shrine; the whole city was crying and was in a state of mourning. At that time, Dr. Karan Singh was at Varanasi for presiding over the University convocation. As soon as he heard the unfortunate news, he left for Srinagar and on the morning of January 4, he went to visit Hazratbal in a private car without any security. Dr. Karan Singh writes : “As soon as we reached the Shrine, I was immediately mobbed by thousands of people who had been virtually camping there since the relic had disappeared a week earlier. They seemed genuinely delighted to see me and pressed around me. Some of the elderly people kissed my hands and embraced me saying, *Hamara Badshah aa gaya* (Our king has come). I was deeply moved to see that despite three decades of virulent anti-Dogra ruling dynasty propaganda and brainwashing by Sheikh Abdullah and his party, the Kashmiris retained regard and deep affection for me even in their hour of anguish.”¹

Maharaja Hari Singh was confident that the people of the State had love and respect for him and it was on the basis of this faith that the Maharaja sent a long memorandum to the President in which he had demanded that a referendum be held in the State upon the issue of retention or abolition of the ruling dynasty. This was reported in the newspapers. Pandit Nehru thought that it was not possible either from the local or from the international point of view to hold the referendum and hence, brushed aside the idea. Dr. Karan Singh also had pleaded with him for holding such a referendum. He wrote to Pandit Nehru, “I feel it would be a good thing, as it would give the people of the State a fully democratic method of expressing their decision as to whether they would like a member of the dynasty to be their Constitutional Head or would prefer to elect someone periodically.”

The chief characteristic flaw in Maharaja’s character was that he had pride and regard for his royal dignity. He would break but not bend. He was a true patriot and anti-British. The British Government could not tolerate his voice against their rule in India at the first Round Table Conference in London. The opportunity soon came to it to teach a lesson to him when. Abdul Qadir, an

outside Muslim, who was a cook of some English visitor in the State incited the Muslim population to rise against the Maharaja. It was July 13, 1931, the day when the seeds of hatred against the Maharaja and minorities were sown. Unfortunately, the Maharaja did not know the mechanics of politics and was a poor political negotiator unlike his great grandfather Maharaja Gulab Singh.

Maharaja Hari Singh has been accused by his adversaries of being a sinister epicurian, an autocrat who did not care for the welfare of his people and was communal in outlook. They said that he was indecisive and acted like Hamlet in the historical drama of Kashmir.

I was a witness to the era and had many opportunities in my youth to see and talk to many celebrities in Srinagar and Jammu. For many long years, I have interviewed many knowledgeable persons and had the good fortune of having access to many libraries, particularly Amar Mahal Library, which is very rich in books on Kashmir. All this enabled me to see in better perspective the traumatically changing times in Jammu and Kashmir. These accusations about Maharaja Hari Singh are unfounded; all the evidence points to this conclusion.

Exposed to the modern thought and values of the British in the Mayo College, Ajmer, where he studied, he became liberal-minded. There was intrinsically nothing of an orthodox Hindu in the Maharaja. He respected all religions and treated people of different castes and religions equally. In his time, everyone had freedom of conscience and worship. The doors of the temples were opened to Harijans on 2, November 1932 and no place was allowed to be desecrated. During the previous reigns, Rajputs and Brahmins were immune from capital punishment. This disparity was removed by Hari Singh.

He has unjustly been accused of being discriminatory towards the Muslims, but this is far from truth. He treated every community equally. The Muslims were engaged in agriculture, and small-scale industries. They were fine artisans and earned from tourism. The Muslims, less adaptable and more conservative than the Hindus, at first shunned English education and were encouraged

by their orthodox religious leaders to do so. Hindus gained priority in education which helped them considerably in the struggle for jobs. This had far reaching economic and political consequences. Dogra Rajputs preferred to get themselves recruited in the army and the other sections of Jammu were petty shopkeepers and agriculturists. The Kashmiri Pandits preferred to become clerks rather than doing anything else.

Kashmiris, as a class, were not recruited in the army because centuries of foreign rule had made them docile. A Kashmiri was a peace-loving man who was influenced by the pious teachings of his sages and *sufis*. Thus, he shunned the army. But the Muslims of Jammu occupied 33 per cent of the army jobs, who, when the raiders swooped over the valley, one and all, treacherously joined them. Maharaja Hari Singh, to redress the grievances of the people, issued an order under which the State Subject was defined and no outsider could get a job or acquire land in the State.

The advent of Sheikh Moh'd Abdullah marked a turning point in Kashmir's history. The British recognised the Sheikh as a sword of damocles on the head of the Maharaja and felt jubilant. However, Sheikh's motive was economic or political rather than communal. He never swerved from the principles of secularism and socialism.

But Sheikh Moh'd Abdullah had certain psychological defects. Being a silver-tongued orator and gifted with convincing talk, he had tremendous confidence in his powers that gave him his haughtiness and inflated his ego. He was caught in the mess of contradictions. He levitated because of the tremendous ovation of applause of the public. Nehru's obsession for him and his tremendous respect and love for the Sheikh descended like manna from heaven into his outstretched hands. But personally, he had allergy for Maharaja Hari Singh.

In the hindsight of history, Abdullah was vacillating and could change from one political mood to another. At first, he wanted a democratic form of Government under the aegis of the Maharaja. Later, when he saw that his popularity had dwindled after the visit of Jinnah to Srinagar, who spurned him, he resorted to "Quit Kashmir Movement". He played the trump card of the

Treaty of Amritsar signed on March 16, 1846 between Maharaja Gulab Singh and the British which he called a 'sale deed'. Sheikh Abdullah had previously left the door open for negotiations. Now, he laid down an ultimatum. He was determined to go through a sort of civil disobedience, come hell or high water. He wanted the abdication of the Maharaja. At that time, R.C. Kak was the Prime Minister who had risen from the post of a Librarian of a local college. Kak was knowledgeable, mentally alert, politically conscious and resourceful. When Abdullah and his associates made seditious lectures and in mass rallies spoke against the Maharaja and the Dogra dynasty, Kak put him behind the bars and crushed the agitation. Nehru dramatised the situation and rushed to Srinagar but was not allowed to enter the State and was arrested and released next day. He immediately went back to attend the conference at Shimla.

Sheikh Moh'd Abdullah was prone to commit many indiscretions on little provocation and in his long spells of dark moods, became impulsive and hasty and made long tirades against India and the Dogras and they defied him and gave him no co-operation. His "New Kashmir" meant that Kashmir be a republic in a republic, a separate constitution, a separate flag, a separate President, etc. Dogras rallied round their stalwart leader, Pt. Prem Nath Dogra and his party Praja Parishad and agitated against him.

Before the independence of India, Maharaja Hari Singh was caught in the grip of political dilemma, splitting his mind between independence and accession to India. Before Redcliffe Award was announced, Lord Mountbatten paid a visit to Srinagar and impressed on Maharaja that he could, if he liked, join Pakistan with which Kashmir had preponderant continuity and as 77 per cent of the State's population was Muslim. Mountbatten said that he had the assurance of the Government of India that this action of the Maharaja would not be treated as an unfriendly act. This was an indirect hint to the Maharaja that he should accede to Pakistan. Sixteenth of August, 1946 was the "Direct Action Day" of Jinnah and the great killings of Calcutta and Punjab, the epicentre of communal conflict, was now the cockpit of communal carnage. Fury mounted to frenzy, so, to Hari Singh, these incidents jolted

his complacency, revealing how thin was the thread on which the sword of disorder hung over Kashmir and he read these developments as storm signals. He sought to enter into a standstill agreement with India and Pakistan. India delayed and Pakistan immediately signed the Agreement.

To Maharaja Hari Singh, the question of joining Pakistan did not arise, for a Hindu ruler could not be safe in a theocratic Muslim dominion and to join India was to lose his throne and he toyed with the idea of remaining independent. In this, he had the co-operation of his Prime Minister Kak and Raj Guru Sant Dev who had a great influence on the thinking of the Maharaja. He had become nervous because of the serious illness of his only beloved son, Yuvraj Karan Singh.

Soon after Mahatma Gandhi's visit to Kashmir in early August 1947, Kak's services were terminated. It was not the Maharaja who delayed accession of Kashmir, but rather the Government of India headed by Pandit Nehru who procrastinated until it was too late. Prem Shankar Jha reveals that right from September, Hari Singh was trying that his accession should be accepted by the Government of India, but Pandit Nehru wanted to put the cart before the horse. He first wanted to transfer all the powers to Sheikh Moh'd Abdullah and hold the election so that the accession would be accepted by the Government of India, while the Maharaja wanted the reverse. His primary concern was the security of the people, particularly the minorities. Even when the raiders were knocking at the doors of Srinagar, Nehru was hesitant. It was Brigadier Rajinder Singh who checked the tide of the tribesmen for four days at Uri while the Government of India was complacently discussing the despatching of the Indian army.

Nehru seems to have made grave mistakes *vis-a-vis* Kashmir. In October 1947, the Maharaja of Jammu and Kashmir had acceded to India and his decision was endorsed by Sheikh Abdullah and his party National Conference and in May, the same year, the Constitution of India was made applicable to the State. Two years later, Kashmir's elected assembly sanctioned this act—the process was complete. Earlier, Nehru had sent the Kashmir's case to the UNO, and India had become a pawn in the hands of

the foreign powers and thereby a long-drawn uncertainty prevailed in Kashmir and Abdullah became the cock of the roost.

Around 1951, the unchallenged power of Sheikh Moh'd Abdullah had infected his thinking and judgment. Even then, his mind was moving towards independence for the valley with himself as the "Kashmir's equivalent of the Grand Mughal". He had become belligerent and now held the trumps and made it clear that he would meet the Government of India on his own terms.

I know Dr. Karan Singh quite intimately and have found him to be a gifted man. He did the bold and wise thing when he accepted to be the elected Sadar-i-Riyasat in the teeth of opposition from his revered father whom he intensely loved; otherwise, by hindsight, one may say that the state would have disintegrated or at worst become a Sultanate. It was his superb tact and agility to walk on the razor-edge of Kashmir's politics. Time brings some awkward revenges. It was Dr. Karan Singh, the son of Maharaja Hari Singh, who dismissed and arrested Sheikh Moh'd Abdullah in 1953. Sheikh Abdullah fell from power and was not able to recover it so fully since becoming a victim of his own defects.

I have divided this book into four parts, corresponding to the four stages of man or four seasons of the year; first, the flowering and efflorescent spring which is the turbulent and fascinating period of one's life, then the exuberant summer full of energy and purpose of life after which comes the mellow autumn when the leaves turn russet and begin to fall, the time when man gained experience and maturity. This is followed by lone, cold and frosty winter when for man "but to think is to be full of sorrow and leaden-eyed despair." These parts in the book are not water-tight; they may overlap at places.

In the first part is the description of Maharaja's birth and education; glamour of coronation, the joys of wedding and his lovely sports, songs and music. Then comes the vigorous part of his life when he swiftly brings social and administrative reforms. His was really an era of reforms. He expanded, organised and streamlined every branch of administration and made the governance most efficient. His goal was to make the State a

welfare and a model State in the modern time. His aim was to have a British System of parliamentary Government under his aegis, about which Sheikh had also written to him.

In the autumn of life, there is the invasion of raiders and regular Pakistan army. Maharaja Hari Singh accedes to India. Then, India seeks the intervention of the Security Council. The last stage in the life of Maharaja Hari Singh is that after having been forced to abdicate and exile, he spends his last years of his life in Bombay all alone, where he passes away and is cremated there on the sea shore. His ashes are brought by his son Dr. Karan Singh and, according to Maharaja's will, are sprinkled by him over the city of Jammu from an aeroplane.

Now that the dust of controversies has settled, Maharaja Hari Singh emerges as a remarkable man, as the poet John Shirley says :

*“Only the actions of the just
Smell sweet and blossom in their dust.”*

Every effort has been made to adhere to the chronological order but at times, due to historical compulsions, it has not been possible to do so.

References

1. Singh, Karan : Autobiography, 1997, p. 26

1

Jammu and Kashmir State— Geographical and Political Features

In Maharaja Hari Singh's era, Jammu and Kashmir State was quite a compact and united State. It had four natural divisions—the Jammu Province, the Kashmir Province, the district of Ladakh, and the Gilgit/Baltistan region.

The Jammu Province, earlier known as Duggar, is a land, by and large, a virtual arcadia—a land of plains, meadows and valleys, watered by crystalline streams, where the landscape is broken by hills crowned by tall trees under which, after a day's labour, a man may stretch himself and blissfully contemplate and a woman may lie on a *charpoy* (cot), gaze at the star-spangled heaven and dream. Their dreams seem wrought out of :

“The dreams the drowsy gods

Breathe on the burnished mirror of the world

And then smooth out with loving hands and sigh.”

And, when the night falls, serious occupation with art takes the place of their day's jobs as a means of varying the monotonous existence.

From this attitude of mind was born the exquisite Dogra folk art and a period of incubation which culminated in the

magnificence of Basohli and Jammu paintings, the grandeur of Krimchi architecture and royal palaces, the splendour of Bhabor's sculpture, the joyously glistening temples soaring up to kiss the skies and dexterously block-printed sheets of kaleidoscopic designs.

No, not that Dogra spent his days in *dolce entente*—he had heterogenous occupations. He was a farmer and an artist by choice, hunter by compulsion and by force of circumstances, a fierce warrior. He followed *bhakti* creed and ingrained in himself the passion for freedom and a zest for living and beauty.

Kashmir is one of the loveliest natural beauty spots in the world. With the emerald plains and snow—capped hills, the crystal lakes, abundant valleys and beautiful gardens, it is a dreamland of enchanting beauty, 'a paradise on earth'. The emperors and common men were enamoured of its intoxicating loveliness, likened it to 'an emerald set with pearls'. Here nature had unstintingly poured all the treasures of fruit and flower and stream. The people, by and large, followed the *Rishi* cult, an amalgam of Hindu *Bhakti* and Islamic *Sufism*, and were gentle and docile. They were mainly agriculturists and artisans of first rank. Kashmiri shawl was loved and donned by Empress Josephine, the wife of Napoleon, the great conqueror.

Ladakh is grandly situated on the roof of the world. The centuries-old culture of Ladakh has found expression in its monuments, oral literature, art forms, fairs and festivals. And, in the time-honoured tradition of collective celebrations, every occasion—marriage, birth, harvesting or even the flowering of plants—is marked by feasting, dancing and the singing of folk songs that form a part of its living heritage.

Here, we find Buddhism in pristine and pure form. Its monasteries and high rugged mountains have an impact of mysticism. It is a paradise of sportsmen who find *markhur* and other high game. Many people come here for adventure and exploration. The people of Ladakh are simple. They spend their time in little cultivation and spinning wool or rotating the wheels of *dharma* in their hands.

Jammu and Kashmir State was the largest State in India and

during Maharaja Hari Singh's reign¹, its area was 84,471 square miles and its population, according to the Census of 1941, was 40,21,616. The number of Muslims was 31,01,247; Hindus 8,09,165; Sikhs 65,903; Buddhists 40,696 and others 4,605.

The State had been divided into three parts for purposes of civil administration, namely, the Jammu Province, the Kashmir Province, and the district of Ladakh and Gilgit Agency. As a result of the transfer on lease of the Trans-Indus region to the Government of India, the Cos-Indus area consisting of Bunji was earlier included in the Gilgit district. It was integrated with the district of Ladakh during 1935-36. It was placed under a Revenue Assistant and was included in the Kashmir Province. The heads of the revenue administration in the provinces of Jammu and Kashmir were the two Governors, while the Ladakh district was under a Wazir Wazarat and each district was divided into several tahsils. Some tahsils also had sub-divisions called Niabats under them.

These divisions are as follows :

Province	District	Tahsils	Niabats
Jammu	Jammu	1. Jammu	
		2. Samba	
		3. Akhnoor	
		4. Ranbirsingh Pura	
	Mirpur	1. Mirpur	Naushera
		2. Bhimber	
		3. Kotli	
	Udhampur	1. Udhampur	
		2. Ramban	
		3. Ramnagar	
		4. Bholderwah	
		5. Kishtwar	
	Reasi	1. Reasi	Gulabgarh
		2. Rajouri	
	Kathua	1. Kathua	
2. Jasmiergarh			

		3. Basohli	
Kashmir	Anantnagh	1. Anantnagh	
		2. Kulgam	
		3. Avantipura	
		4. Srinagar	
	Baramulla	1. Baramulla	
		2. Sripratapsingh Pura	
		3. Uttarmachi Pura	Gurez
			Sopore
	Muzaffarabad	1. Muzaffarabad	
		2. Uri	
		3. Karnah	
	Astore	(Under a Revenue Bunji Assistant)	
	Ladakh	1. Ladakh	
		2. Kargil	
		3. Skardu	

Jammu and Kashmir State was bounded on the north by China and Russian Turkestan, on the east by Chinese Tibet, on the south by Punjab and on the west by North Western Frontier Province. The northern borders of the State met the territories of the three powers, viz., Britain, China and Russia and independent Afghanistan.

Besides, a small strip of land along the borders of Jammu, which is the continuation of the plain of Punjab and a bleak tract adjoining Karakoram mountains, the territories of Jammu and Kashmir include valleys from the rivers Chenab, the Ravi and the Jhelum and the middle reaches of the Indus.

The geographical divisions² given in the handbook of Jammu & Kashmir State indicate that the first two divisions form the Jammu Province while the third is the Kashmir Province, and the fourth comprises the districts of Gilgit and the frontier areas of Skardu, Ladakh and Kargil.

There is the sub-mountainous and Semi-mountainous track of plain land which leads to Punjab and includes some *kandi*



areas which girdle the Himalayan range. The Ravi, the Chenab and other streams flow through the southern plain and go to the Punjab. Rice, wheat, maize and other crops grow in this part. The source of irrigation is the canals drawn from these rivers and streams. The *kandi* in north is stony and sandy and depends solely on seasonal rainfall for the purpose of cultivation. The area of this division is 2,609 sq. miles and the population was 81,408 according to the census of 1941. The altitude of the *kandi* area is 2,000 feet and even less.

Then, there is the belt of the outer hills which includes low hills to the south of the mountain ranges. The whole area is covered by the ranges of low hills to the south of Pir Panjal mountains. These divide the provinces of Jammu and Kashmir from each other. The altitude of this area, barring Bhandarwah, which is over 5,000 feet, is from 2,000 to 4,000 feet. Between the hills on the lower levels are small valleys which are cultivable. The higher elevations are covered with pine and deodar forests. The area of this region is 9,769 sq. miles and the population, according to the census of 1941, was 11,67,405. The maize is the staple food of the people, though rice and wheat are also grown in certain parts. Being in proximity to the Pir Panjal mountains whose high attitude causes the mountain-bearing winds, deposit aqueous vapours in this area.

Thirdly, there is the Jhelum Valley which consists of valleys through which the Jhelum and Kishenganga rivers pass while flowing down to the Punjab. These valleys are surrounded by mountains and streams whose sources of water are the surrounding snow-clad mountains. The Jhelum Valley, the Sindh and the Lidder and the hilly tract of Muzaffarabad form the Kashmir Valley. The Kashmir Valley is fertile; rice and fruits are produced in abundance. Wheat and maize too are grown. The cultivated area of Muzaffarabad is small and agriculture is rather scant. The area of the division is 8,539 sq. miles; the population was 17,28,705 as per the census of 1941.

Fourthly, there is the semi-Tibetan tract of the middle reaches of the Indus. The source of the Indus river is Mansarovar in Tibet and it flows through the whole division running from south-east

up to the bend round Nanga Parbat, where it takes a south-westerly course. The mountains in the north reach up to Pamirs and acquire great heights. Mount Godwin Astru is 28,250 feet above the sea level and is the second highest peak in the world.

In the Himalayan ranges, to the north-south of the Indus, we find *markhur* and other big games. The ranges of this division, barring Gilgit, are from 17,000 to 22,000 feet. The rainfall of Ladakh is small and agriculture is carried on by artificial irrigation. The cultivable area in Ladakh district is very small. *Grim*, a kind of wheat, is the cheap food and is grown even at a height of 15,000 feet. The Gilgit area has good climate for cultivation and produces wheat, fruit and other crops. The population of the division was very sparse and was 3,11,478.

The climate of Jammu and Kashmir State varies from the arctic cold of the Ladakh district to the extreme heat of the Jammu plains.

In the semi-mountainous region of Jammu, there is tropical heat while Kashmir has a temperate climate in summer and very cold in winter. In the frontier areas, particularly in Dras, Zanskar, and Rupshu, there is extreme cold. The deep narrow valleys between Kashmir and Gilgit are hot and damp. Kishtwar and Baderwah have salubrious climate. In the frontier area of Gilgit district, rainfall is small and Reasi and Poonch get more than 60 inches annually. The annual rainfall of the Jammu district is nearly 45 inches while in the Kashmir Valley, it is from 30 to 35 inches.

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1. Jammu and Kashmir Hand Book, 1945, p.11
2. *Ibid*, pp. 1-2

2

Ancestors

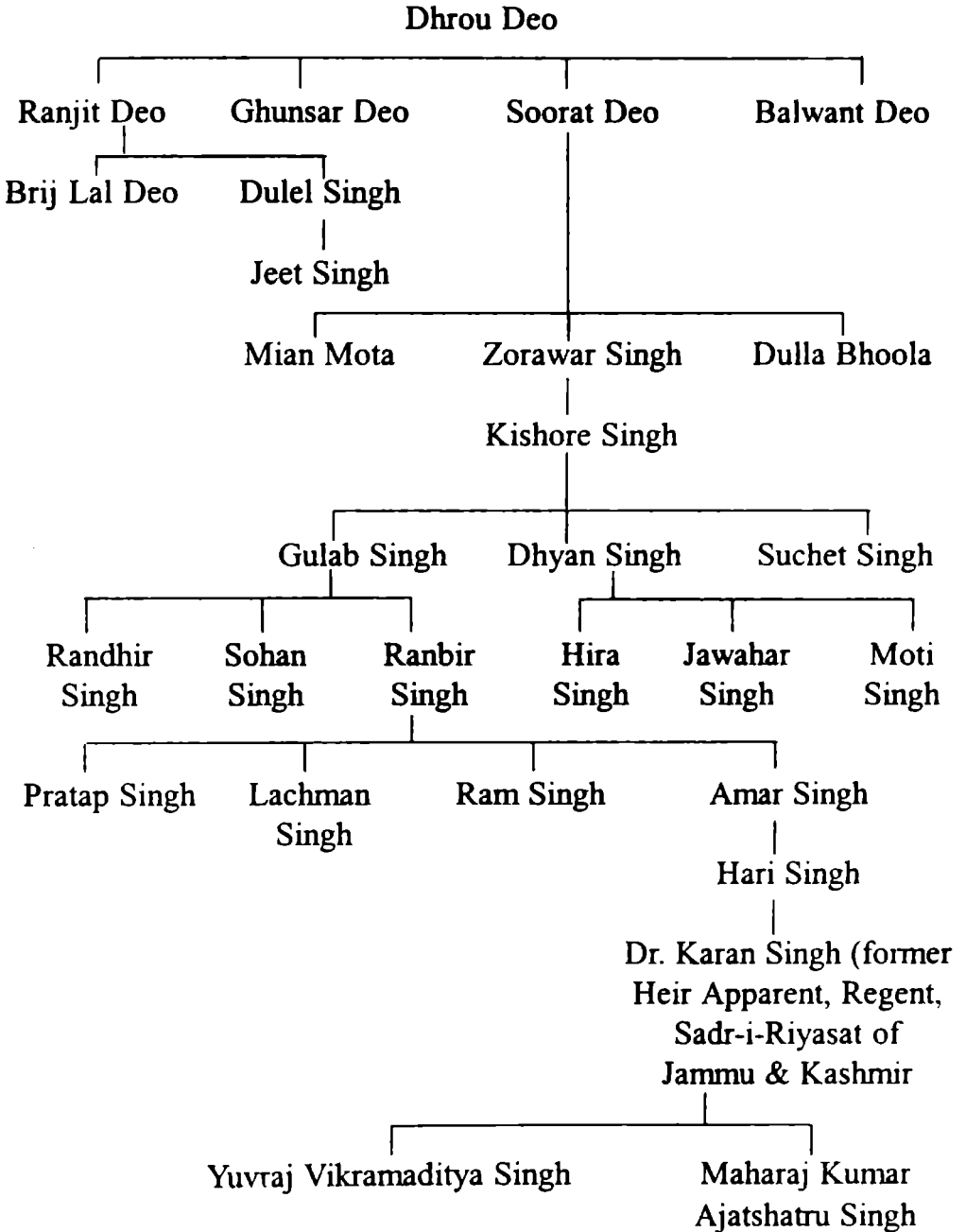
The real history of Jammu begins with Raja Dhrou Deo. Before him, the Jammu province was divided into small principalities.

Maharaja Gulab Singh : The Founder of Jammu and Kashmir State

“He is the only ruler in India’s long history who could be said to have extended the geographical boundaries of India...No previous Indian ruler, not even Samudra Gupta or Akbar, had even dreamt of invading Tibet, and though Zorawar, ventured too far, he paid penalty for his adventure; the Maharaja’s forces routed the Tibetan army and extended the border of India to the other side of the Himalayas”, so wrote K.M. Pannikar¹ about Maharaja Gulab Singh, the founder of the Jammu and Kashmir State.

After the invasion of Mohammad-ud-Din Ghori, the Rajput hegemony in the hilly tract between Punjab and Kashmir was shattered. The Rajput rulers who had sway over the town of Jammu regained their independence when the Mughal Kingdom began to show signs of disintegration. They were combined under Raja Dhrou Deo and his son Raja Ranjit Deo. The latter received

Genealogical Tree of the Dogra House



a *jagir* from the Durrani king for the help rendered against Raja Sukh Jewan of Kashmir.

Ranjit Deo had two sons, Brij Lal and Dulel Singh. Brij Lal revolted against his father and later succeeded him in 1780. Mohan Singh, who is known to history as the brother of Ranjit Singh, was a sworn friend of Brij Lal, but he conspired against him and attacked Jammu. Thus, the sovereignty of the House of Dhrou Deo over the surrounding country disappeared for the time being. Brij Lal was succeeded by his one-year-old child Sampurna Deo. He died at the age of eleven and was succeeded by Jeet Singh, the son of Dulel Singh.

Gulab Singh is descendant in direct line from Raja Dhrou through his third son, Mian Soorat Deo. Cunningham doubts the genealogy of Gulab Singh. But Maharaja Ranjit Singh, in his grant of the rule of Jammu to Gulab Singh, mentioned the fact of Gulab Singh's ancestors having been the rulers of the principality. Raja Dhrou Deo was a Rajput prince of the Surya Vansi (Solar) dynasty who ruled over Jammu in the eighteenth century.

It was the year 1792 when Maharaja Gulab Singh was born.² His father was Kishore Singh who held a *jagir* at Andarwal in Jammu tehsil, but his young days were moulded by the stern hands of his grandfather at whose feet he learnt statecraft, archery, marvellous horsemanship and unparalleled wielding of sword and thus was cast in a heroic mould. The boy grew up to pass into history as 'Ulysses of the Hills'.

Realising that the affairs of Jammu were in confusion, Ranjit Singh saw the opportunity and ordered Bhai Hukam Singh, his able lieutenant, to march on to Jammu and annex the same to the Sikh State.

Maharaja Gulab Singh, a young boy of sixteen, lashed by his own heroic spirit, galloped off from his grand-father's house and joined the pitched battle. He fought and proved his mettle by smashing many warriors of the enemy and made them withdraw; but Bhai Hukam Singh hurled his large columns on the hills of Jammu and ultimately annexed it. By this time, Gulab Singh had grown dignified in appearance, well-built, sturdy with a sensitive mind. His eyes, large and fiery, drew attention at once.

His fearlessness won him the favour of his enemy and subsequently Bhai Hukam Singh brought him to the notice of Maharaja Ranjit Singh, who took him in his service.³ Later on, his brothers Dhyan Singh and Suchet Singh were also given jobs by the Maharaja. In fact, Dhyan Singh rose to become the Prime Minister of the Sikh State: From then on began Gulab Singh's odyssey of various deeds; the siege of Multan brought him to the admirable notice of Ranjit Singh. In the frontier campaign of Ranjit Singh between 1815 and 1820, Gulab Singh played a prominent role. Day by day, his dignity and influence increased at the Sikh Darbar.

It was an age when fighting and adventure was a medium of self-expression for vital and restless people.⁴ One such intrepid chief was Mian Dido who had plagued the Sikh Government of Jammu and Ranjit Singh asked Gulab Singh to bring him down. By a stratagem, he cut off Dido's supplies and thereafter attacked him in his citadel and shot him dead.⁵ In 1822, the State of Jammu was given to Gulab Singh as jagir and he was allowed to keep his force. He was also granted the title of Raja. Soon, Gulab Singh, by a diplomatic feat, conquered Kishtwar. Ranjit Singh harboured an old grudge against the Raja of Rajouri and he was anxious to humble him. So, under instructions from Ranjit Singh, Gulab Singh marched on to Rajouri and defeated the Raja.

Maharaja Ranjit Singh was highly pleased with Gulab Singh and in 1822, he personally came to Akhnoor. The trumpet sounded and the men cried 'Raja Gulab Singh ki Jai' and Maharaja Ranjit Singh himself applied *raj tilak* to Gulab Singh and thus Ranjit Singh conferred on him the principality of Jammu, which was then officially passed on to a Dogra ruler.

With unfaltering feet, he marched on and on and made thrilling conquests and pulled down all the chieftains of Jammu territory on to their knees and annexed their territories—Reasi, Bhandarwah, Jasrota and Basohli etc. Then, the Dogra army under General Zorawar Singh, marched upwards up to Tibet and proudly planted the *Suraj Bansi* flag on the roof of the world. In the depth of harsh summer and hard winter, the Dogra forces marched fearlessly through frost and snow, facing regular as well as guerilla

mountaineers and conquered Lhasa, Baltistan, Gilgit, Kargil and Bunji.

Maharaja Gulab Singh was now at the pinnacle of power but soon after the death of Maharaja Ranjit Singh, the Lion of Punjab, on 27 June, 1839, there started confusion and turmoil at the Lahore Durbar. There were wanton sardars who were jealous of the Dogra brothers. They and even Rani Jinda, who then held the whip of power, hated them like poison. The result was that Maharaja Gulab Singh's two brothers and a nephew, one by one, fell victims to the Sikh assassins. Maharaja steeled his heart and escaped death narrowly, though his extermination was also planned.

Sikhs and the British—The Confrontation

At last the wheel turned. The British were staring at the fertile land of Punjab with fascination and covetous eyes. Punjab was broken and they saw the chance to crush it under their heels. Maharaja Gulab Singh's imagination worked as vigorously in war as in peace; the military quality in him was tempered with reflection. He saw that luxury had enervated the Sikh chiefs and he cautioned them not to antagonise the British. They did not heed the warning and on 13 December, 1845, the British attacked the Sikhs and defeated them near Hari-ka-Batta. In the next war at Sobraon, they defeated them again. Maharaja Gulab Singh was accepted as the mediator and was called to negotiate. By the Treaty of Lahore on March 9 and 11, 1846, the Sikhs were required to relinquish the Jullundar Doab and both banks of Sutlej river, to pay an indemnity of Rs. 1.5 crores and reduce the army to 20,000 infantry and 12,000 cavalry. A British unit was to be posted in Lahore for the remainder of the year with the Sikhs paying the expenses.

The Lahore Durbar expressed its inability to pay the full amount of indemnity and would either have ceded their entire territory or the treaty would have been paralysed. Maharaja Gulab Singh, wielding stark reason to settle problems, saw the stupidity of not making peace with the British and could observe the coming events through the shadow. By not acting unwisely, a bridge over the crises was built by him when he came forward to pay Rs. 75

lakhs. Punjab was saved for the time being.

Kashmir Passed on to Maharaja Gulab Singh

The Treaty of Amritsar was made on 16th March, 1840 by which the State of Jammu and Kashmir and other areas were given to Maharaja Gulab Singh.⁶ To say that he was given these areas on payment of Rs. 75 lakhs is to put the cart before the horse. The British had already decided to hand over the hilly areas to Gulab Singh as, with their base at Ferozapore, and the menacing people on the line of communication ready to rise, it would have been impossible for the British in 1845 to conquer Kashmir and retain it. The prospect was completely dark for them. Another main object which the British had in view was to dismember the Sikh empire.

It was by political wisdom as well as by conquest that Maharaja Gulab Singh acquired Kashmir. "The view that Kashmir was sold for a paltry sum by a Government whose main interest was to fill its coffers is a travesty of facts and misreading of history", says K.M. Pannikar. Kashmir had already been conquered by Maharaja Gulab Singh and he was the de facto "Master of the Valley". Let Francis Younghusband in his book Kashmir speak in this connection : "Raja Gulab Singh has already been mentioned as accompanying Ranjit Singh's troops on their victorious march to Kashmir in 1819. On the death of Ranjit Singh, there was much violence and mutiny among the Sikh soldiers and the Governor of Kashmir was murdered by them. Therefore, a body of about 5,000 men nominally under the command of Sher Singh, Ranjit Singh's successor, was sent to Kashmir to restore authority. This was the year 1841, when the British were still behind the Sutlej, but were engaged in the fruitless and disastrous expedition to Kabul, which resulted in the murder of envoy. Gulab Singh quelled the mutiny in Kashmir, placed a Governor of his own choice and from this time, he became a virtual master of the valley, though till the year 1846, it nominally belonged to the Sikh rulers at Lahore."

The British handed over Kashmir to Maharaja Gulab Singh on paper. Sheikh Imamud-Din, the Sikh Governor of Kashmir,

under instruction from Lal Singh of Lahore Darbar, refused to hand over the possession of Kashmir to the Maharaja. It was only the Dogra force, under the command of Yuvraj Ranbir Singh, aided by “a small British force” that came sweeping with relentless fury that the Governor surrendered Kashmir to Maharaja Gulab Singh,

Then, a nameless soldier from the Shivaliks became resplendent in the brilliant crown of the Maharaja of Jammu and Kashmir.

Maharaja Gulab Singh as an Administrator

It was an age when the frenzy of fanaticism and human suffering evoked no tears. Hearts had become stony but Gulab Singh, even though an orthodox Hindu, was secular in outlook and equalitarian in spirit. No doubt, he was unbearably harsh at times but he found that a strong action was necessary to impress some wanton people with irresistible might, and to put down rebellion and restore order and thereby render trade and commerce safe for all.

No less than 3,115 jagirdars had obtained grants or lands from the previous Governments and the peasantry was suffering. He shocked some of the jagirdars by snatching away their jagirs which mitigated the suffering of the peasants to some extent.

The *begar* or forced labour caused the inhabitants a great deal of misery. He brought reform in this too. He determined a certain number of men in each village who would be considered liable to do labour when called upon by the Government. For this, they were given one *kharwar* of rice per month and their food when employed. When not called upon, they were to be paid six *kharwars* for the year. An officer was appointed to take charge of this work.

Maharaja Gulab Singh introduced rationing system in food and reorganised shawl department and reformed the system whereby the tax was regulated by the price of the shawl in market and the worker was no longer a serf.

Maharaja Gulab Singh as a Man

Cunningham and Major Smyth detested Maharaja Gulab Singh;

yet the former conceded that the Maharaja was an able and moderate man, who does little in idle spirit and who is not without some traits “of good humour and generosity, while the latter acknowledged that Gulab Singh was courteous and polite in demeanour and exhibited a suavity ‘of manner and language’. He further said that he was of good memory, free, humorous and intimate with the lowest and poorest classes of his subjects.”⁷

Sir Henry, who knew Gulab Singh, felt that he was a terror to the tribe of corrupt and tyrannical officials and though his justice was rude, it was expeditious and he would decide cases on the spot.

This summarises his character. Tact, valour, sharp intellect and generosity were the keynote of his character and he possessed every gift that thrusts a man from the depths to peak and lays on his brow the mantle of leadership.

At last, he was broken by dropsy and the shadow of death seemed close by. So, he handed over the reins of his Government to his son and soon after he breathed his last in 1858. The State was like a widow in deep mourning.

Maharaja Ranbir Singh

Maharaja Ranbir Singh, the third son of Gulab Singh, was born in the fort of Ramgarh in *Sambat* 1887 (1830 A.D.). His eldest brother, Udham Singh, was born on 27th *Assuj*, 1874, and died on 22nd *Kartik* 1897. His elder brother, Randhir Singh, alias Sohan Singh, was killed in action in *Sambat* 1901.

Maharaja Ranbir Singh ascended the throne in 1856. The unique thing to be noted in this regard is that his father, Maharaja Gulab Singh appointed him a year and a half before his own demise. Maharaja Ranbir Singh ruled for twenty nine years and thousands donned mourning when he passed away at the age of 55 on September 12, 1885.

A glance at the life and deeds of Maharaja Ranbir Singh would make it vivid how he countered the ever-present centrifugal forces in the vast State of Jammu and Kashmir, giving it unity, peace and the smooth-moving wheels of a well-organised and stable Government.

Bamzai, in his book *Kashmir and Power Politics* writes,

“Ranbir Singh was an excellent ruler and a man of bearing culture and strong intelligence. He was a harmoniously developed personality. He made many conquests in the north-west of India and his power extended almost to the gates of Tibet and it was because of his conquests that India was there. The Maharaja made an efficient legal code under which every sect and religion was treated on equality. Similarly, he established quite an efficacious administrative system and organised polioe and health services and built hospitals. He introduced land reforms and struck his own coins and issued paper currency.”⁸

Maharaja Ranbir Singh's age was one of enlightenment and he established colleges, schools, *pathshalas* and *maktabs*. Education was free at all levels. It was he who introduced printing in the State and set up the Department of Research and Publications.

Maharaja Ranbir Singh's time witnessed a remarkable efflorescence of pictorial and architectural arts. He built many lofty temples in the state, each vying with each other in the architectural grace and splendour. The paintings and murals executed in his time hold an ineffable enchantment for man. During his time, new commercial crops and industrial establishments were set up. Silk factories were established and shawl weaving was encouraged.

Maharaja Pratap Singh

Maharaja Pratap Singh, was born in 1850 A.D. and succeeded to the throne in 1885 A.D. Ranbir Singh left behind four sons, namely, Raja Pratap Singh, Raja Ram Singh, Raja Amar Singh and Raja Lachman Singh with Pratap Singh being the eldest. Raja Lachman Singh died in 1848 A.D. and Raja Ram Singh passed away in 1897 A.D. Raja Amar Singh was one of the richest princes of India and served as Prime Minister and Commander-in-Chief in the State for some time and died in 1907 A.D. He was the father of Maharaja Hari Singh.

Maharaja Pratap Singh's reign lasted for forty years. The greatest contribution of the Dogra rule to Kashmir according to Bamzai are the two trunk roads which were completed in his

time.⁹ The Jhelum Valley road covers the length of 132 miles from Srinagar to the Kohalla Bridge and the Banihal Cart Road, covering a length of 203 miles, was completed in 1922 at a cost of forty three lakhs. Bridges were constructed at Domel, Kohalla and other places.

The Sialkot-Jammu Railway was thrown open to traffic in 1899 which linked Jammu with British India. Pratap Singh constructed a number of irrigation canals—Martand Canal, Lal Kuhl, Pratap Canal, Ranbir Canal, Ujh Canal and Upper Jhelum Canal. The Zainagir Canal project was completed in the year 1931 at a cost of Rs. 11 lakhs. A flood spill channel for diverting the waters of the Jhelum was constructed between Ram Munshi Bagh and Pandrethan. Drudging operations were conducted below the town of Baramulla for removal of silt. A weir was constructed across the Jhelum at Chatabal to maintain enough water in the river during winter and droughts. Arrangements were made for supply of pure water on sanitation lines to the cities of Jammu and Srinagar. Civil rights of the people were recognised and a step was taken in the direction of local self-government by establishing two municipalities—one at Jammu and another at Srinagar. Two first-grade colleges were founded at Srinagar and Jammu with a network of schools spread all over the country to fight ignorance and illiteracy.

One of the greatest measures of Pratap Singh's reign is the land revenue settlement of the country under the able supervision of Walter Lawrence.

The British Government posted a Political Resident in Kashmir. Dr. M.L. Kapur writes : "Only about three and a half years of his accession, Pratap Singh's powers were transferred under the orders of the Government of India to a State Council. It was presided over by the Maharaja's youngest brother, Raja Amar Singh, and thereafter by Pratap Singh himself. However, in 1905, this Council was abolished and the Maharaja was partially restored. Sixteen years later, he came to enjoy his full powers. During the period from 1889 to 1905, the overall control of the State administration rested with the British Resident."¹⁰

Maharaja Pratap Singh was a pious ruler. He did not take

meat nor did he shoot any game. Everyday from morning till noon, he would be busy with his "Puja". His simplicity and avoidance of ostentation are proverbial. He was extraordinarily liberal in charity. He never refused a gift or a charity to anybody. He would relieve and rescue an orphan.

Kar-i-Sarkar or forced labour survived to his day but it was paid for. As education spread, a wave of resentment arose among the local intelligentsia against the outsiders who had almost all the services in their hands. The administration was mostly manned by outsiders. But he did not care for this voice of the people.

Maharaja Pratap Singh was not blessed with a son. Once or twice a child was born to him but none survived. Hari Singh, the only son of Raja Amar Singh, and nephew of Maharaja Pratap Singh, thus became the heir-apparent. Maharaja Pratap Singh died on 23rd September, 1925 A.D. at Srinagar and his obsequies were performed by Raja Jagat Dev Singh, the second son of the Raja of Poonch who had been adopted for the purpose and who later succeeded to the *gaddi* of Poonch, a jagir under the sovereignty of Kashmir Durbar.

Raja Amar Singh (1864-1909)

Amar Singh, the third son of the late Maharaja Ranbir Singh, was born at Jammu on 4 January, 1864. His education was conducted under the personal supervision of his sagacious father, who was anxious that his sons should be brought up according to the noble traditions of the Dogra Rajputs. He also saw that it would also be a mistake to withhold from him the benefits of Western education.

His father's wisdom in respect to Sri Amar Singh's training was reflected in giving his practical experience to him, in the works of various State Departments when he was young. By the intrigue, the British Government had forced Maharaja Pratap Singh to abdicate the throne and formed a Council of Regency under the Presidentship of Raja Amar Singh. In the report for the first year of its existence, it was pointed out that under Raja's guidance and control, the Stores Department had been reorganised on a sound system of management, calculated to eradicate the

frauds from which it had previously suffered. The British Government appreciated the Raja's administration and he was appointed the Knight Commander of the Order of the Star of India on 10th November 1891. Maharaja Pratap Singh was reinstated in 1891 and ruled with the assistance of the State Council, of which he took the Presidency, Raja Amar Singh being nominated to the Vice-Presidency. Amongst the beneficial public works undertaken at his instance may be mentioned the Sialkot-Jammu Railway, the Jammu Water Works, the Tawi River Bridge and the Jammu-Udhampur Cart Road. The list may be extended. It may be remarked that the Raja had the penchant for architecture. The Amar Mahal, one of the residences, was constructed by a French architect with the help of Raja Amar Singh's own designs and specifications. It is the most noteworthy example of his hobby.

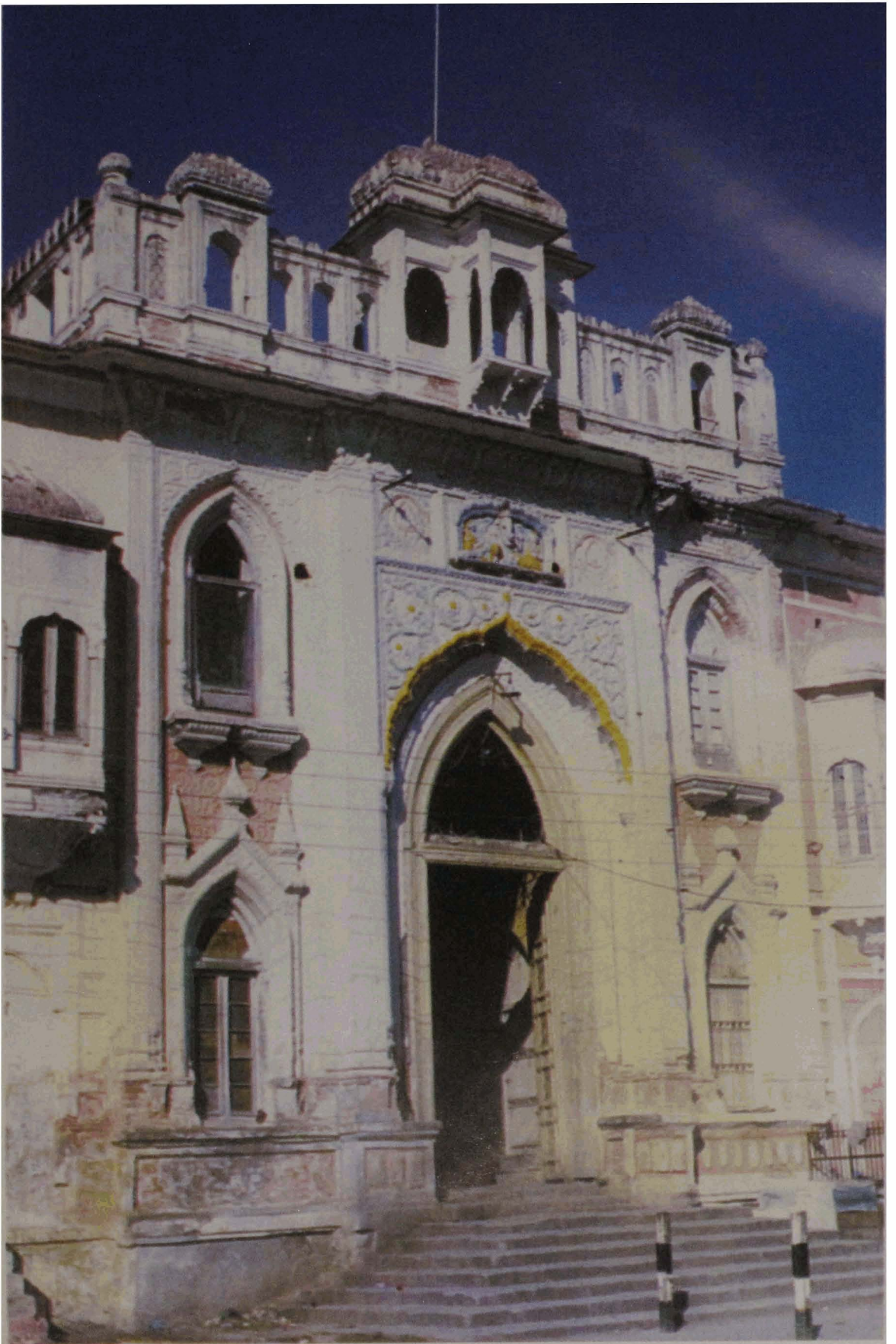
He breathed his last in 1909.

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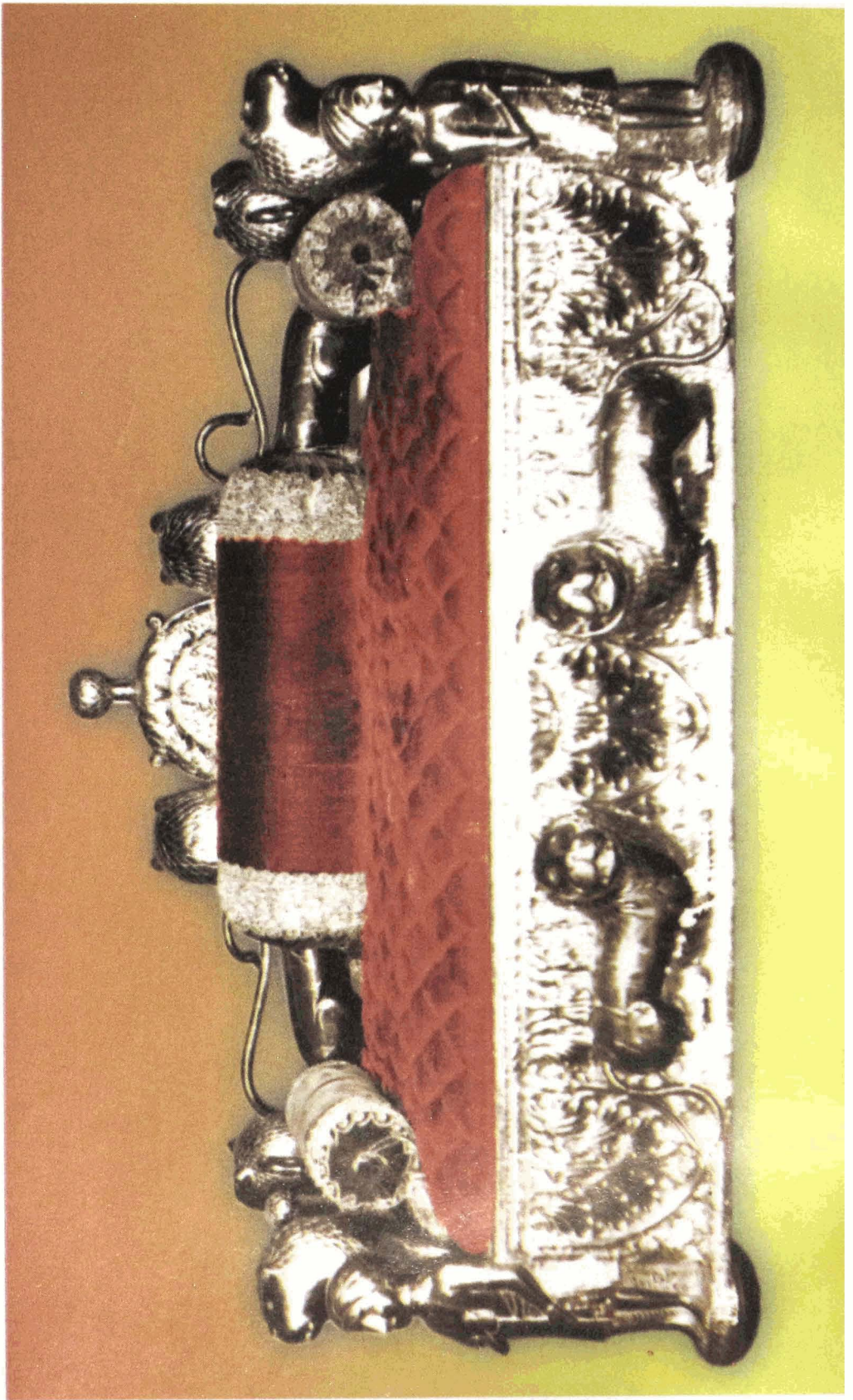
Maharaja Ranbir Singh, his successor to the throne



A portion of the old palace, where Maharaja Hari Singh was born



Amar Mahal, where Maharani Tara Devi spent most of her life





The Spring

*“Verse, breeze, ‘mid’ blossoms straying
Where Hope clung feeding, like a bee—
Both were mine! Life went a maying
With Nature, Hope and Poesy,
When I was young!”*

—Coleridge



Early Life

The glorious landmark in Dogra architecture is the huge complex of palaces which stands on the eminence known as Mubarak Mandi in Jammu, overlooking river Tawi gliding nearby. This palace complex commands one of the finest views which human eyes can gaze upon. Its size, beauty and grandeur are so harmoniously united that it appears, particularly in the golden and crimson rays of the rising and the setting sun, as enchanting as a vision. It is here that Maharaja Hari Singh was born on 21 October, 1885. On that day, all the palaces and the whole city of Jammu were illuminated and the State was jubilant irrespective of religion, caste and creed. This was because the princely order in India had then some glory on the birth of a prince and was an occasion of merriment for the people. The slaughter of animals, fishing and shooting were prohibited for some days. Offerings were made in temples and mosques and all the school children were given sweets. The prisoners were released and alms were distributed among the poor.

Maharaja Ranbir Singh (1856-1885), who ruled over Jammu, Kashmir, Ladakh, Dardistan and Baltistan, looms large through the mists of time—the towering figure whose valour and humanism has cast an aureole of glory round the ruler for centuries to come.

He had three sons, Raja Pratap Singh, Raja Ram Singh, Raja Amar Singh; Lachman Singh died when only about five. Maharaja Ranbir Singh was succeeded by his eldest son Raja Pratap Singh, then 35 years of age.

Maharaja Pratap Singh had a son who died after eleven months and no other child was born to him. Raja Ram Singh had two male babies but they died in infancy and he himself passed away at the age of 45 in the bloom of his youth and his only daughter was later married to Raja of Chenani, a jagir in the Jammu province, by Maharaja Pratap Singh with all splendour.

Hari Singh, the son of Raja Amar Singh, inherited a fine physique, good looks, intelligence and riches from his father.¹ Raja Amar Singh took special care in the education and upbringing of Hari Singh. He received his early education from a number of Indian and European teachers. After his father's death in 1909, his education and upbringing became a matter of great interest to the British Government of India which appointed Major M.K. Brar as his guardian. When Mr. Brar proceeded on leave, Hari Singh's guardianship was entrusted to another British Officer, Capt. Burge. In 1908 at the age of 13, Hari Singh entered Mayo College, Ajmer where his education was supervised by English teachers. After completing the full course of studies there, he received training at the Imperial Cadet Corps, Dehradun.

Hari Singh's Western education left an indelible impression on his character—his love of secularism, progressive outlook and ceaseless activity and discipline are, in a great measure, attributed to the influence of the Western education. He shunned the hustle and bustle at the early life and this became a determining factor in the choice of sites of his palaces in Srinagar and Jammu. Pomp and show, commonly regarded as an essential paraphernalia of the princely order were his abomination and he delighted in his military uniform; simple and unostentatious that no outsider could distinguish him from his dress as the ruler of the large State in India, but for his tall stature and typically Aryan features that betrayed him.

In 1915, Maharaja Pratap Singh appointed him as the Commander-in-Chief of the State forces.² In 1922, on the

restoration of full powers to Pratap Singh, a State Council was formed again and to keep Hari Singh in the State Administration, he was appointed as its Senior Member. In this capacity, he came into contact with the people and understood their difficulties. He solved the food problem when there was scarcity in 1921-22. Writes P. N. K. Bamzai, the historian, "It was due to his intelligent handling of the situation that a severe famine in the Valley was averted. He patronised the appointment of State subjects at all the posts in the administration. He was not dominated by members of any religious faction and placed his trust equally in his Hindu and Muslim officials."³

During the first World War, Raja Hari Singh was responsible for training and equipment of the units of the State army which were sent to the front. These units won laurels in France, Palestine and East Africa. He made a personal donation of Rs. 43 lakhs to the War Fund.⁴ "But all, these services", writes P.N.K. Bamzai, did not save him from becoming the victim of an unscrupulous attempt at blackmail in a big way, and for a few days in 1921, the case of 'Mr. A.' was to monopolise the headlines of certain British newspapers."

The British Attempt at Blackmail

This scandalous episode is important because it brought a cataclysmic change in Maharaja Hari Singh's character and thinking vis-a-vis the British.

A number of Indian princes, including the Dogra rulers, offered their subjects administration far better than the British. The most vicious among the rulers of Indian States were allowed to retain their thrones provided they acknowledged Britain as the paramount power. In fact, a ruler could get away with almost any kind of outrageous behaviour including a few discreet murders without the British disturbing him, provided his loyalty remained intact. For example, Maharaja Bhupinder Singh, the seventh Maharaja of Patiala, had accumulated 350 ladies in his harem.

The British Government of India would try to find out any loopholes or weaknesses among the Indian princes and they would encourage all their unique idiosyncracies and aberrations so that

they would act according to their dictates through the Residents placed in each of the States.

In 1919, Raja Hari Singh visited England for the first time.⁵ He was 24 years old, full of vigour and in the bloom of his youth. He was then the Commander-in-Chief of the State forces. He was accompanied by a military officer named Capt. C.W.A. Arthur, who had been deputed by the India Office of the British Government as his A.D.C. and to act as a guide during the Raja's sojourn in England and one Mehbooba worked as his secretary. On this occasion, he became the victim of an organised blackmail by a gang of Englishmen crooks and Capt. Arthur acted as their leader. He had manoeuvred all the plot.

On the night of November 4, 1919, the first anniversary of the signing of the Armistice at the conclusion of the First World War (1914-1918), a Victory Ball was held at Albert Hall in London. At such sumptuous functions, it was usual that there should be a great gathering of gallant men and glittering ladies whose jewels sparkled when passionate glances were exchanged and splendid atmosphere was created by sweet kisses and soft embraces in the intoxicating state.

Among those occupying the boxes in front was Raja Hari Singh; earlier the box next to his was occupied by a pair of charming women named Mrs. Robinson and Mrs. Bewan. This seating arrangement had been cleverly manipulated by some crooks in order to entice the Raja for the purpose of robbing him of a large sum of money. The scoundrels seemed sure that the coquettish, refined grace of Mrs. Robinson would captivate Hari Singh. But Mrs. Robinson's beaming smiles at the Raja were of no avail to her, although he had a brief conversation with her in a formal way. Raja Hari Singh had to leave immediately for Paris on way back to home. But, soon after, Mrs. Robinson, followed by her husband, came to Paris, probably arranged by Mr. Arthur. Without his co-operation, nothing could have been done by the crooks.

On the morning of December 1919, Mrs. Robinson was seated in a normal way just talking in a pleasant manner to Raja Hari Singh at St. James and Albany Hotel in Paris. The door of

the room had, most probably, been purposely kept open and through it appeared Robinson who quarrelled with his wife and left after threatening divorce proceedings against her. Then, A.D.C. of the prince, Mr. Arthur, played a sinister part in the drama assigned by his masters that might have been. He told Hari Singh that if the man started the case against his wife, the Raja would be co-respondent and this would surely debar him from succeeding his uncle to the throne of Kashmir. Mr. Arthur advised him that he should buy off the irate husband. Raja Hari Singh, on his strong persuasion, issued two cheques of £150,000 each in the name of Robinson and sent Arthur that very day in order to dissuade Robinson from going to court.

One of the cheques was duly cashed by the crooks but they fell out over the division of the amount, with the result that the matter reached the court. The Raja remained incognito as 'Mr. A'. But by the end of 1924, the case was leaked out. Thus, John Gunther, in the book "Inside Asia" (p. 455) writes : "A sad episode in the life of Raja Hari Singh, when about thirty years of age, caused considerable sensation at the time. His name came into unwelcome prominence in the case of Robinson versus Midland Bank Ltd. In 1925, as 'Mr. A' he was the central figure and victim of a celebrated £ 3,00,000 blackmail case."

It was a simple blackmail case and the British made a mountain out of a mole hill. Raja Hari Singh should not have paid any heed to it and given even a penny to Arthur and instead should have kicked out the couple and Arthur out of the room and let the matter have its natural course. Any other prince would have taken it in its stride and, fortunately, there had not been any libidinous slip so that they could raise heaven and hell.

The British had actually another motive. They wanted to keep Hari Singh under their toe. Besides, the transfer of the Valley in 1846 to Maharaja Gulab Singh conformed to the policy of raising a timely barrier. But, soon, the British, out of fear of the Russian advance in Central Asia and Persia, began casting their covetous eyes on the beautiful Valley. Col. Durrand wrote, "Why it has been asked to interfere there? The answer, of course, is Russia. It has advanced practically to Hindukush; it is necessary that it does

not cross it” (Bamzai : Kashmir & Power Politics, p. 27).

Therefore, after the demise of Pratap Singh, they wanted to have full control over Kashmir, particularly Gilgit and frontier area of Kashmir. That is that, but the germ of hatred for the British was injected in him by this episode of the English who adopted fancy airs when in India and when their Residents treated dignified Indian princes as their vassals.

Accession of Raja Hari Singh

Hari Singh’s accession to the throne was not without hurdles. The main reason was his misdemeanour in London as well as the animosity between Pratap Singh and Amar Singh. Earlier, Maharaja Pratap Singh was accused by the British Government being in league with Russia and forged letters were produced and Amar Singh seemed to have testified under the British pressure. As a consequence, Pratap Singh was deposed. He was made to sign an *Irshad* or edict of resignation on March, 1884. According to this *Irshad*, he was relieved of all part in the administration which was placed in the hands of Council of Regency consisting of Raja Amar Singh, Raja Ram Singh and an experienced European on two thousand per month, R.B. Suraj Koul and K.B. Bhag Ram. The Council was presided over at first by Diwan Lachman Dass and a year later by Raja Amar Singh. The Viceroy accepted the *Irshad*.

Pratap Singh would have completely been deposed but the plot of British intrigue was exposed by the *Amrit Bazaar Patrika* of Calcutta in a magnificent article, “Condemned Unheard”. This caused a great excitement in the British Parliament and Pratap Singh was reinstated.

Now, the British got another chance of depriving Hari Singh of the throne by the decree of Pratap Singh and taking the State over under direct British administration. But, therein, they were not successful.⁶ Actually, Pratap Singh had adopted Jagat Dev Singh as his son as it was he who performed his obsequies. Jagat Dev Singh was the second son of Sir Baldev Singh and great grand son of Gulab Singh’s brother Dhyyan Singh. He was adopted at 14 years of age, shortly after the World War I. A rumour was

afloat that Maharaja Pratap Singh wanted his adopted son Jagat Dev Singh to succeed him when Raja Hari Singh was involved in the case in London, already related at length. But it is reported that the Earl of Reading, the then Viceroy of India, decided to allow Hari Singh to ascend the throne according to Article I of the Treaty of Amritsar.

Therefore, Maharaja Pratap Singh's mantle fell on the shoulders of his nephew, Raja Sir Hari Singh, the son of the second brother of the late ruler and the great grandson of Maharaja Gulab Singh. So, Raja Hari Singh, born on September 30, 1895, ascended the *gaddi* (throne) as Honorary Lt. General His Highness Raj Rajeshwar Maharajadhiraj Sri Maharaja Hari Singh Ji Bahadur, Inder Mahinder, *Sipar-i-Saltanat-i-Englishia*, G.C.S.I., G.C.I.E., K.C.V.D., Hon. LL.D. (Punjab, 2nd Dec., 1938) Honorary A.D.C. to his Majesty, the King of England.

Coronation (1926)

Maharaja Hari Singh's coronation in 1926 was a great event in the State.⁷ The Jammu city hummed with activity. On this occasion, thousands of rupees were spent to metal and improve the roads and streets. Maharajas, Rajas, Nawabs, nobles and rich magnates and many British friends came to Jammu. Those of the dignitaries who were invited and could not come were represented by their special men who came with messages of congratulations for the Maharaja. The Rajas, Jagirdars, Sultans and landlords from Jammu & Kashmir, Ladakh, Gilgit and other areas of the State were also invited. Also present were the dignitaries from some areas of Tibet. For a fortnight the guests were attended in a royal fashion. To witness the splendour of the celebrations of the *Raj Tilak*, thousands of people came from Punjab and the plains of India. The celebrations were also held at every district and tehsil headquarters with gaiety and pomp.

When Maharaja Hari Singh came from Srinagar, he visited the palace in a buggie (a vehicle drawn by four horses). He was accorded a rousing reception by the Jammu citizens; the preparations for his coronation started at the official level and also at the unofficial public level. The city acquired a bridal look

as all the main bazaars from Mubarak Mandi to Raghunath Temple turned pink. From the Purani Mandi to the City Chowk, a new road was constructed in place of Dhakki having stones and pebbles.

A Parsee dramatic company from Calcutta staged plays. The guests and visitors were given free passes to witness the plays which ran for fifteen days.

It was on February 25 that the Durbar for *Raj Tilak* was held in all magnificence which was worth witnessing. At one O'clock in the afternoon, a procession of some elephants with chaplets of jewels was arrayed. These were draped elaborately with blankets of gold and flowers. There was an ornamental royal elephant, Jamana Das, in front. The howdah in which the prince was seated, the animal's harness, the great saddle-cloth which covered his back, were magnificent. Like pendants, golden chains hung from each of animals' ears and surmounted on it was a golden umbrella. The elephants' foreheads were decked with jewels and pearls. Behind the elephants which carried the rulers and other dignitaries, there were rows of lancers dressed on horses with colourful cloths covering their backs. At 1.30 p.m., the ritual of *Raj Tilak* was performed at Purani Mandi as per the tradition. This was performed by Puran Singh, the thakur of Akhnoor. From Purani Mandi, the procession paraded through the roads and returned to Mubarak Mandi where presents were offered by the dignitaries and State Officers. During the night, the whole city was illuminated.

P.N.K. Bamzai, the historian, writes : "Maharaja Hari Singh ascended the *gaddi* with a fund of his Subjects' goodwill to his credit. Born on October 21, 1895, he inherited a fine physique, good looks, intelligence and riches from his father, Raja Amar Singh."⁸ He further says, "No wonder, the educated classes of the State placed great hopes in the young Maharaja. Though disproportionate, expenditure of State funds on the occasion of his *Raj Tilak* ceremony, celebrated in Jammu in March, 1926, gave rise to misgivings. But these were quickly removed by the Maharaja's promulgation of certain boons. He astonished everyone, when, in the presence of a large gathering of

distinguished guests including a large number of ruling princes in the country, he declared that "my religion is Justice". The boons announced on this occasion are as follows :

- (i) One of the boons conferred on the landholders was the right to cut down and utilise all royal coniferous trees on areas assessed to land revenue.⁹
- (ii) The right of the villagers to remove the dead and fallen trees extended from 3 months to 12 months.
- (iii) The third boon bestowed certain rights on village communities with regard to the land of landholders dying without issue.
- (iv) The most important of the boons was the bestowal of Khalsa land in village communities which had no *shamilat* (village commons) upto cent per cent of their holdings.
- (v) His Highness also sanctioned on the occasion the extension of technical education on certain localities in both the provinces, for instance the opening of more schools and hospitals.
- (vi) The provision of a special allotment every year for the supply of water in the *kandi illaqa*.
- (vii) The reconstruction of bridge over the Tawi at Jammu.

All these concessions then announced had been materialised.

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Marriage with Tara Devi

The first marriage of Maharaja Hari Singh was solemnised in 1913 with the princess of Dharampur (Kathiawar), but she passed away just a year later after a brief illness. The second marriage was performed with the daughter of Raja Bhoori Singh of Chamba in 1915, but after marriage, she lived only for three or four years. Then, he married the second princess of the State of Dharampur (Kathiawar) in 1923. Unfortunately she also died after 5 years and there was no issue.

Not to have a heir apparent so far became a serious problem for the Dogras. They got fearful that the Viceroy would one day invoke the powerful Doctrine of Lapse and take the State under the direct administration of the British Government. Greybeards of the Court nodded their head in assent. Hari Singh, a rational man of modern ideas, would not wait but marry a poor girl from some village who must be beautiful, vivacious and vigorous. It is said that Gen. Janak Singh of the State Army had known this kind of a girl on his visit to his relative Th. Beli Chand Katoch of Bijaypur in the Kangra Valley and he thought that this marvellous gem should adorn the palace of Jammu & Kashmir. Hari Singh, hearing the praises of her beauty and accomplishments from his trustworthy General, was fired with the desire to marry her. "Bring

her soon and install her and her family in the Chashmashai Palace in Srinagar where the wedding would be performed with all serenity and solemnity.”

When the messenger came, she said to her father, “No, Bhapu Ji, whoever crosses the threshold of the palace is not allowed to see her parents and relatives. I can't do without them.”

“No, this is false, all your men and women will accompany you and live near you in Jammu,” she was assured.

Accordingly, they put round her neck a gold necklace set with jewels, the token of espousal. This story, though apocryphal, seems probable.

Tara Devi actually belonged to the ancient royal family. Lt. Col. R.K. Dogra writes in *Indian Express*¹ (June 5, 1992) : “Situated on the right bank of the Beas river atop a foothill amidst desolated countryside called Changer, the old but impressive historical village, Bijaypur, once the capital of the Katoch Rajas, who were the direct descendents of the famous Raja Susarma Chand of Mahabharata fame and the rulers of ancient kingdom of Trigarta. The very fact that Bijaypur was the capital of Katoch kingdom for nearly 100 years warrants a greater appreciation of the place. History of Trigarta or Kangra is synonymous with the history of the Katoch dynasty. Katoch was the ancient name of Kangra and the word was still in use till the early 17th century.

“The seat of Katoch rulers used to be the ancient and legendary Kangra fort till Jehangir captured it. Then the Katoch dynasty had to see the days of adversity and it was during the period of adversity that the Katoch ruler, Raja Vijai Ram Chand, founded Vijaypur in A.D. 1660 as the seat of the royal family and made the new capital of the kingdom. Bijaypur retained this exalted position till the reign of Raja Ghammad Chand.”

While due to the onslaughts of the Muslims and the Gorkhas, the various members dispersed to other places, one member of the Katoch family, Beli Chand, stuck to this secluded retreat. Tara Devi was the daughter of this Beli Chand Katoch.

Maharaja Hari Singh could not but be captivated by Tara Devi's extraordinary charm and it is said that her fascination could not entirely be lost on the Maharaja. For quite a large number of

years, the Maharaja and Maharani lived in harmony and tranquility; otherwise large number of social reforms done in their time could not have been possible. Maharani Tara Devi hunted on horseback with her husband. She was a good shot, particularly when hunting duck. They often cooked together, went on picnics and travels and enjoyed the pleasures and joys of life together. She did not fade away between the screens of the palace but became the inseparable companion of her husband for many years². There are photographs in Amar Mahal Library which depict her preoccupations.

Maharaja Hari Singh made many social reforms; he tried to mitigate the sufferings of women. He himself had lived like a happy Prince and could have had no knowledge about them. Maharani Tara Devi had full knowledge about them. What rendered the idea of Tara Devi's affinity for the miserable more acceptable was that she had seen the sufferings of the common folk face to face in her early life and her feeling for the in distress seemed to have been so strong that her efforts for bringing about a social reformation with the help of her husband became almost the cult and an ideal. Four years after marriage, she was seen sitting openly in a car along with her husband; she went on a tour of Europe along with her husband. When she returned, she was seen sitting openly in a car along with him.

She took genuine interest in the affairs of the State during the World War when Maharaja Hari Singh was away on the war front. When the War ended, the British Government awarded her the "Imperial Order of Crown of India". She also headed many societies which worked for the upliftment of the poor.

But after some time, it was found that there was incompatibility between Maharaja Hari Singh and the Maharani, which got enhanced due to the role of her brother Nachint Chand. No doubt, Tara Devi was a village girl and Hari Singh was a stern ruler of one of the largest India's native States. She was deeply religious and Hari Singh had no particular interest in religion. Their character traits were quite opposite to each other. Dr. Karan Singh, in his autobiography³, writes : "My mother was warm, gregarious and loved children; my father was stern, severe

and moved only in a carefully chosen circle of courtiers and very few friends. My mother was strong on conversation; my father was so formidable that normal conversation in his presence was virtually impossible; my mother was superstitious..."

But, being a devoted religious woman, she would have adjusted her husband's lifestyle for lifelong, but it seems that due to the influence of her brother Nachint Chand, the gulf between the husband and the wife widened. Maharaja Hari Singh, first showed quite a goodwill towards the Katoch family. Th. Nachint Chand was a non-commissioned Officer in the Dogra regiment at the time of her sister's marriage and Hari Singh gave him a large *jagir* and made him a ranking courtier. He worked as Chamberlain to Maharani Tara Devi. Her other brothers, Th. Harnam Chand and her cousin, Thakur Chand, were given government jobs and lands. Nachint Chand would tell his sister Tara Devi that once when she was a child, he had saved her from drowning in the village pool at Bijaypur.

Dr. Karan Singh⁴ writes that, "While Nachint Chand was a shrewd and basically loyal person, his intellectual horizons were limited and he was greatly given to seeking the magic favours of *swamis* and *sadhus*." It is anybody's guess what was the purpose of his taking such interests. Dr. Karan Singh further writes : "There was no doubt, in the difficult years that my mother spent after her marriage, a village girl suddenly transported into the vortex of court intrigue, he was a tower of strength to her, and he seldom lost an opportunity of pointing out how, had it not been for him, she would have fallen victim and perished long before. In this, he incurred the displeasure of opposing faction at court and was generally unpopular and disliked by the Jamwal baradari, my father's kinsmen." It is possible that they poisoned the ears of the Maharaja and he hated Th. Nachint Chand immensely. He was convinced that he would exploit the family.

The great flaw in Maharani Tara Devi was her filial obedience to and an extraordinary attachment for the family of her parents. She had a tremendous predilection for her brothers and their families. She helped them a lot but their greedy behaviour was abhorrent to Hari Singh. The result was quite evident, the couple

got estranged and as Tara Devi did not want to live under his roof without Nachint Chand, she preferred to leave him in 1950 and go to Al Hilal, a few miles from Palampur in Himachal Pradesh, where she had purchased a palace, abandoned by a Nawab who had migrated to Pakistan. Then she came to live near her son in Amar Mahal in Jammu. Her brother was with her and he continued to live in Amar Mahal even after the death of her sister. It was not possible to house a library and museum there but it was devoted private Secretary of Dr. Karan, Singh Shree Milap Chand who persuaded him to go to Bijaypur, for, as he told him, that it was proper for him to breathe his last in his ancestral home.

A Day in the Life of the Maharani

Maharani Tara Devi would not remain idle. Early morning, a sheaf of petitions came from widows, orphans, parents who could not marry off their daughters—all seeking charities. The Maharani was moved to pity at the sight of the misery. Seldom did a distressed person's appeal go without success. Each day, large sums of money, garments, jewellery were given in charity. The late Maharani loved to work. It was her good fortune, she thought, to be in a position to help those who were in need. She used to plead often with the late Maharaja on behalf of the servants or officials who had incurred his displeasure.

The author of "Heir Apparent", her son, Dr. Karan Singh, says that Maharani Tara Devi was from a poor family and howsoever she may have liked the trappings and tinsel of royalty, she always considered it a sacred duty to alleviate the sufferings of the poor. Throughout her thirty years as Maharani, she spent large amounts in helping not only her poor relatives but also hundreds of common folk in want and distress. It is impossible to recount the number of girls she got married off and that of the houses for the poor she had made.

Mother to the Harijans

Maharani Tara Devi would not tolerate the distinction between man and man based on spurious notions of caste purity. She had, like her husband, equalitarian ideals and wanted to build a bridge

between socially unequal girls⁵. Thus, she included Harijan girls among the nine who were worshipped during the holy Navratras. She did not believe in culinary taboos and freely interdined with the members of other religions.

She appears to have persuaded the Maharaja to throw all temples opened to the Harijans. Thus, untouchability was abolished in the State long before Mahatama Gandhi took up the cause. Special scholarships were provided to the Harijan boys and girls in schools. Orders were issued for giving them preferential treatment in services.

Maharani Tara Devi got many Harijan girls married off at her own expenses and gave away clothes and jewellery to many of them.

Other Social Reforms

She made every effort to get infanticide among the Rajputs stopped. Every Rajput parent who had a daughter was allotted one acre of State land and substantial financial help was given to him. Infant marriage was made a serious crime and also immoral traffic of girls was recognised as highly punishable offence. The late Maharani also got many widows married at her own expenses.

Interest in the Promotion of Education

She felt deeply interested in the promotion of education in the State. She presided over the functions of colleges and delivered addresses on the occasion of convocation and prize distributions in the three colleges of the State.

In one address, she said, "Education is almost free and compulsory at certain places in the State, but there is nothing extraordinary in this. The children have the same claim in receiving primary education like the milk of their mothers. The question of compulsion or payment does not arise. If the teaching staff of your institute teaches the children with motherly love, they can achieve literacy in a short time. I trust that the character of the candidates will not be lost sight of in the selection of teachers. The higher education is not imparted merely for passing examinations. The real purpose is to fit the students for meeting

all difficulties in their future life with ability. Today, India is passing through a critical period. Hence, this is the time when the ability of those who have received education in various educational institutions is being put to a serious test. Their education can be said to have been successful only if at this historical moment they give the proper lead and show the requisite qualities of foresight, patience, humanity, tolerance and love.”

On this occasion, the teaching staff and the Principal, Dr. R.K. Bhan, described the occasion as a red-letter day for the education department.

Special attention was given to the female education also. A separate department of female education was opened in the State. Many girls' schools were opened in the State and girls were admitted in the colleges and given scholarships.

Service to the Soldiers

In World War II, the Indian troops were sent to the war fronts and Maharaja Hari Singh had left for London to attend the meeting of Churchill's War Cabinet of which he was the member. Earlier, he had paid a visit to the State Forces in the Middle East. During those War days, the late Maharani felt that she should do something for the jawans at the forward area and their families at home.

She organised a War Committee and Ladies' Club in which Dogra and Kashmiris, both Hindu and Muslim leading ladies took part. They would knit, sew and prepare sweets and pickles for troops in the forward areas. They would also collect money, clothes and blankets and distribute them among the families of the soldiers engaged in war. Her social service was recognised by the British Government which awarded her “The Crown of India”, a decoration reserved for distinguished women.

Refugee Relief Work

In 1947, as we know, the State was at the centre of political storms and history was rapidly being forged on the anvil of clashing events. The Pakistani raiders had complete sway over the villages bordering with Pakistan. The terror that stalked the boundaries of the State was ruthlessly making its way into the

city of Jammu itself, which had become a large refugee camp and the prospect was black as an Indian night. But Maharani Tara Devi rose to the occasion and it was at that moment that her courage and strong organisational capacity came to surface. She would spend the whole day in distributing rations and clothes and till late night attend to the needs of the crying women and children. Often, she influenced and arranged for simple marriages among the refugees. She organised a Women's Seva Dal, which was later called Maharani Seva Dal, and arranged para-military training for them from the army authorities and ex-servicemen. She allotted to this Dal a large amount of money from her own privy purse. Thus, she was in every way active in the refugee relief work. She was hailed as the "Angel of Mercy".

Many distinguished personalities visited the centres of this organisation. They praised the Maharani, who had taken charge as the General Officer Commanding of the Seva Dal as "Ex-Officio". The Dal, under her instructions and guidance, had set up some other sections such as the Army Wing, Refugee Relief Committee, Nursing and First Aid Wings, etc. The volunteers of the Dal arranged stage-cultural shows before the troops in the border area.

Lady Mountbatteen, who paid a visit to Jammu, said, "I am much pleased to visit the Maharani's Seva Dal. It gives me added joy to watch the young girls handling rifles; girls are smart not only in training but are all educated with moral outlook." Gen. K.M. Kariappa, the Commander-in-Chief of the Indian army, wrote to Maharani Tara Devi, "The Dal was started at a very critical time when the peace of the State was threatened and the pressure on the borderlines by the hostiles was on the increase every moment." The initiative of a number of patriotic ladies was funded by Her Highness Maharani Sahiba of Jammu & Kashmir. Under her guidance, eves woke up and became ready to defend their country at a critical time. Similarly, Baldev Singh, Defence Minister, Maniben Patel and Mrs. John Mathai also expressed their high appreciation for Maharani's patriotic work during the dark days of the Pakistani aggression.

The Renunciation

Maharani Tara Devi became a play thing of circumstances over which she had no control and after her estrangement from her husband, she went on pilgrimages to various holy places in India and also visited the great temples in the South in the company of her son, Dr. Karan Singh. During these pilgrimages, she gave large sums of money in charity. After the demise of her husband, the gracious lady passed her days in complete retirement within the four walls of Amar Mahal, wearing only white garments and no jewellery. "Life has no taste for me now", she cried.

Seclusion and renunciation are great sharpeners and refiners of the sense of spirituality and peace because they encourage the habit of concentration on God-head. So was it with Maharani Tara Devi. There was much spiritual upliftment in her which has been depicted by Sd. Sobha Singh in her portrait of later days, displayed in the Amar Mahal Museum. But, even in those last days of her life, the interests of the distressed were dearer to her life itself and she continued to send them help in cash and kind.

She was suffering from diabetes and suffered a prolonged illness and was served to the end by his son and daughter-in-law and her chief maid, Prabhu Ji, formidable in her look but with a heart of gold. Maharani Tara Devi passed away in Delhi in 1967.

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2. There are many photographs preserved in the Amar Mahal Museum and Library, Jammu which depict the preoccupations of late Maharani Tara Devi.
3. Singh, Dr. Karan Singh : Autobiography, 1997, p.5
4. *Ibid*, pp.43-44
5. *Ibid*, p. 60. Dr. Karan Singh has given the activities of his mother. There is also a pamphlet (undated) on late Maharani Ji. This has been published by Chand Press, Jammu.

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Birth of Yuvraj Karan Singh

Maharaja Hari Singh and the people of Jammu and Kashmir State felt proud of Maharani Tara Devi who gave birth to the heir apparent, for whom they were pining. Yuvraj was born on March 9, 1931 at the elite coastal resort of Cannes in France. All over the State, people went to mosques and temples for thanks giving and prayers. The first three days were declared public holidays and buildings, both public and private, were illuminated. There were rejoicings and celebrations all over the State. Sweetmeats were distributed among children and the poor were given free rice and money, prisoners were released.

Heir to the throne of the largest State of India sequestered in the royal isolation of the palaces with the hoards of servants and courtiers; he was made to learn horse-riding, polo and *shikar* (hunting). But, later, he broke the shackles of nobles oblige with which he had been bound. Yuvraj rode on the wave of egalitarian socialistic society ushered by the independence of India.

At this time, he treasured the moments which he spent with his mother, a pious lady who taught him songs in the lilting Dogri language.¹ He felt proud to be a Dogra so that Dogra roots were deep in his psyche. He studied in Doon School at Dehradun and read prolifically which made him think of the vast world outside

the ramparts of the Palace. Later, he passed M.A. in Political Science in first class first from Delhi University and he then did his Ph.D. from the same University.

When quite young, he witnessed a horrific scene which gave him a great shock and forced him to take a very bold decision. He writes : "At that time, I went out to Dachigam and shot a bear while it was eating mulberries on one of the trees. It fell to the ground crying pitifully like a child and was lying there till it died. These cries haunted me for weeks and as a result, I decided to give up shooting and fishing. It was evidently the same influence that led privately to record a signed note on January, 1952 to the effect that my long aim was to achieve spiritual enlightenment and peace and to successfully spread the message throughout the world which is rushing headlong into the dark and frightening abyss of destruction along the road of hell; any cruelty and fanaticism can be saved and turned towards a clear sunlit path of peace, happiness, love and universal prosperity. I was just under twenty-two years when I wrote it."

At knickerbockers stage, Karan Singh's life has not been a spring breeze and one of broken bliss. He met an accident and suffered physically and for some time, he was tossing on the sick bed and then it necessitated surgery and a year's stay in an American hospital. He learnt there the American democratic process from the bedside T.V.

This illness of Yuvraj virtually unhinged Maharaja Hari Singh. Again, later on, he met with another accident after which the Maharaja called him to Bombay for treatment. The Maharaja became immensely sad following all those developments, and, he bore it silently as there was nobody to whom he could pour the anguish of his heart. He had, naturally, tremendous love for his only son who could be the staff of his old age.

In 1949, Dr. Karan Singh was appointed as Regent at the early age of eighteen by his father, Maharaja Sir Hari Singh, on the intervention of Prime Minister Pandit Jawahar Lal Nehru.⁷ Thereafter, he was elected Sadar-i-Riyasat from 1952 to 1967. His was a unique instance of the last representative of the old order becoming, by the will of the people, the first representative

of the new. During these years, he was successful in fulfilling the delicate and onerous duties entrusted upon him as Head of the crucial State of the Union.

Maharaja Hari Singh passed away on April 26, 1961 and he could not see that his son had arisen a luminous star on the political, intellectual and spiritual horizon of India. As we shall see, his mind was yoked to conflicting devotions. Yet, it was, in all probability, assured brilliant at every turn without strain or tension. It passed from one devotion to another, a contrary one, with athletic ease. The inner rhythm never altered nor ever was lost.

In March, soon after India's fourth general elections, Dr. Karan Singh was inducted as a member of the Union Cabinet. At 36, Dr. Karan Singh was the youngest person ever to become a Central Cabinet Minister. On this appointment, he resigned his Governorship and stood for election for the Lok Sabha from the Udhampur Parliamentary Constituency in Jammu and Kashmir on behalf of the Indian National Congress. He was elected with an overwhelming majority and was re-elected from the same constituency in 1971. For the third time, he held the seat with handsome majority in the 1977 general elections, and repeated the feat in the 1980 general elections, thus proving beyond doubt, his hold over the hearts of the people despite drastically shifting political results on the national scene.

Dr. Karan Singh was first assigned the portfolio of Tourism and Civil Aviation which he held for six years, where he created a marked impact by his dynamism and dedication. It was during this period that India was firmly placed on the tourism map of the world, the public sector network of hotels, motels and youth hostels were developed, the fleet of Air-India and Indian Airlines strengthened with the latest and most sophisticated aircraft, the International Airports of the country improved along with the installations of modern navigational aids. In 1973, he moved to the crucial portfolio of Health and Planning so vital for the well-being of the nation. Within two years of his stewardship, the seemingly impossible task of eradicating small pox in India had been achieved and a number of steps taken to re-orient rural health

services and restructure medical education. Family Planning emerged as a major national commitment after Dr. Karan Singh announced the National Population Policy in April 1976. In 1979, Dr. Karan Singh assumed the portfolio of Education and Culture in the caretaker Government. During his tenure as Minister, Dr. Karan Singh neither drew any salary nor lived in Government accommodation.

The issue of abolition of princely purses and privileges came before the Parliament and Dr. Karan Singh was the only former ruler who put the entire sum into the Hari-Tara Charitable Trust, named after his parents, in the service of the people of India. He has converted the former palace in Jammu, the Amar Mahal, into a Museum and Library containing priceless collection of Pahari miniatures and personal library of 25,000 volumes. Amar Mahal Museum and Library is a living monument of Dr. Karan Singh's aesthetic and educational tastes. It has been scientifically organised and catalogued by the author who was its founder Curator-cum-Librarian. Dr. Karan Singh also looks after several other trusts in Jammu and Kashmir including the Dharmarth Trust, which administers over a hundred shrines and temples. He formed the International centre for Science, Culture and Conscienceness which is emerging as an important centre of creative art.

He holds the Honorary Professorship of B.H.U. and Chairmanship of the Governing Body of Aurville Foundation.

Dr. Karan Singh was, for many years, the Chancellor of Jammu & Kashmir University as well as B.H.U. and Chairman of the Authors Guild of India, the Commonwealth Society of India and the Delhi Music Society. He is the Vice Chairman of the Jawahar Lal Nehru Memorial Fund, Chairman of the Temple of Understanding, a major international interfaith organisation, Chairman of People's Commission on Environment Development, India, President of India International Centre and the Virat Hindu Samaj, which seeks social reform in the Hindu society. At present, he is the Chancellor of the prestigious Jawahar Lal Nehru University.

A keen conservationist, he was for many years the Chairman of the Indian Board of Wild Life and Project Tiger. He holds the

honorary rank of Major General in the Indian Army and was the honorary Col. of its Jammu and Kashmir Regiment.

Dr. Karan Singh is the author of about twenty books which include writings on Political Science, essays of a philosophical nature, travelogues, translations of Dogri-Pahari folksongs and original poems in English. He has composed devotional songs in his mother tongue. He is a keen student of Indian classical music. He has travelled extensively throughout the country and abroad, having led Indian delegations to important international conferences, including the World Population Conference at Bucharest, the World Health Assembly in Geneva and the second World Hindi Convention in Mauritius. Dr. Karan Singh is a fine orator and is an impressive parliamentarian, speaking fluently in English, Hindi, Urdu, Punjabi and Dogri. Wherever he goes, he is received with affection as one of the outstanding thinkers and leaders, and enjoys widespread popularity and respect among all sections of the people.

Dr. Karan Singh is married to Shrimati Yasho Rajya Lakshmi of Nepal, who is an eminent social worker in her own right, specially in the field of mental retardation. They have three children, a daughter and two sons, and all the three are married.

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6

Sports, Song and Music

Maharaja Hari Singh was “the King of the Indian Turf”. The Ringside always found Sir Hari Singh, when it was boxing, or, when wrestling was the real thing. Test cricket found him at the Brabourne Stadium and, above all, he was part and parcel of the courses of Poona and Bombay. His great ambition was to win all the classic races with Jammu-bred and of course, with an Indian jockey and trainer.

“An uncanny judge of horseflesh, the late Maharaja was a popular figure on the horse course at Bombay, Poona and Bangalore. There were few honours he did not win in the racing world while his famous horses romped home on innumerable occasions to claim a glittering string of cups and plates. He was an outstanding horse-breeder. Throughout his racing career, he never placed a gambling bet on any of his horses. With his matchless inside knowledge, he could have made millions in the ring if he had cared. However, racing for him was ever a fine sport, not a form of speculation and gambling.”¹ Thus wrote Capt. Anant Singh, editor of *National Sports*, New Delhi in his journal of April, 1962 (p.5).

Hari Singh did not excel in racing alone. He was an accomplished tennis player and a crack shot. As a ‘Shikari’, he

had indeed a few peers. Hari Singh was a prince among sportsmen and his contribution to the advancement of sports will ever remain a shining memory.

To promote sports and games in the State, all the facilities for playing were provided for the youth. In schools and colleges of the State, proper Physical Directors and Games Instructors were appointed and every student was required to play one or the other game. Morning Drill was compulsory so that the boys would grow up healthy and sturdy sportsmen.

Hari Singh was not fond of having many friends around him. His friends were drawn from the racing circles and had a few fellow princes as his friends. Of course, he had the company of some foreign friends. One was Victor Rosenthal, a French jeweller who actually was a Russian who had known Hari Singh for a long time and handled much of his jewellery and foreign investments. A British couple, Freddie and Beryl Stileman, were also his friends. The former was in the British firm of Killick Nixons. Among the Indian friends were H.H. Ahedbhoy and his wife Rukhsana who frequently came to visit Hari Singh. Ahedbhoy had a racing background and was a superb singer.

Maharaja Hari Singh did not sing himself but he had good taste for music. Music and singing by experts were the great passion of his life. These provided him solace from his otherwise sordid life. Mehmood Seth used to come to sing *Thumaries* which were his forte. Hari Singh organised music parties along with Mehmood Seth where some of the best artistes in India would perform; among them were Kesarbai Kerkar, Siddeshwar Bai, Begum Akhtar and Maneka Shirodkar. The Maharaja loved music so much that he induced his son Karan Singh to learn classical music. With the former's goading, he learnt music from Ustad Vilayat Hussain of the famous Agra gharana who came to coach him for two summers. "Music has remained one of the major forces in my life", writes Dr. Karan Singh.

Maharaja Hari Singh had heard about a talented singer of Jammu whose singing of Hafiz Jullendhari's creation, "*Nahi, Nahi abi Nahi, abhi to men jawan hoon*", thrilled the listeners. Mallika Pukhraj lived in Shivali di Gali in Rajinder Bazaar in Jammu.

Hari Singh invited her to the palace to sing highly melodious songs, ghazals and folk renderings. Hari Singh was fascinated and appointed her, as she has said, permanently on Rs. 600 per month. The Maharaja generally remained sad and her songs took him out of the morass of sadness, an outcome of his pride. His pride misled him to create enemies and commit blunders. Mallika Pukhraj's songs, undoubtedly, took him out of occasional despair. A man must retain his self-respect, but at the same time, act prudently. Clever and high spirited, the British looked forward to twisting Hari Singh round its fingers. "His behaviour was ungainly at times but there was something imperious in his nature, his glance and his speech. Everybody obeyed his orders. With outside people, he deliberately tried to heighten this impression. In private life, in his youth, on the other hand, he was unconstrained, genial and even confidential, with the taste for witticism, which were never ill-natured but were merry and discreet. Frequently, he took interest in the amusements of his few household people."² This was revealed by Mallika Pukhraj to the author.

To know about the early life of Hari Singh as a ruler, we must know from Mallika Pukhraj herself. Just before independence, she left for Pakistan, but she longed to have a glimpse of her homeland, and it was after a gap of 42 years that she was able to come to Jammu because of the battles of the two neighbouring countries. Soon after landing at the Jammu airport in the afternoon of September 24, 1988, she made queries about the royal palace. Her love and association with it had not subsided over the years.³ She was welcomed by the Curator-cum-Librarian Prof. S.N. Wakhlu (the author) and the Supervisor Shri Karam Singh. She walked in and moved around and broke down when she spotted the portrait of Maharaja Hari Singh, but realising that there were a few visitors around, she suppressed her emotions. Arrangements for her relive repast had been done on the first floor of the Amar Mahal in the large verandah overlooking the river Tawi flowing calmly with a tinge of sadness. When she sipped the tea, Prof. Wakhlu had a tete-a-tete with her and he found nostalgia had overtaken and overwhelmed her. She disclosed how she was named Malika.⁴ "One Baba Roti Ram, a carefree

person, had predicted days before my birth that the child born would rule over the hearts of the people”, and “thus she was named Malika, the queen. (D.C. Prashant in “Kashmir Today”, February-March 1993, issue p.9).

She remained downcast and a violent grief attacked her heart. The silence fell between them. After little time she calmed herself and stammered smilingly that her songs were so brilliant that they dazzled a whole generation.

“How beautiful life must have been for you?” Prof. Wakhlu asked.

She sighed deeply, “Yes, beautiful and sweet. His Highness had great regard for me.” Prof. Wakhlu saw that she was disposed to talk of herself. Though she was very old and haggard, yet her voice was still fresh, vibrating and sonorous.

The visitors book was put before her to write a few lines for record. She wrote in Urdu, which, when translated into English, reads as follows :

“Today, I happen to visit Amar Mahal,
 The whole panorama of old memories
 appears before my view
 and along with it welled up tears.
 Thinking the existing rooms the mansion
 are the same but the inhabitants are no more as before,
 The glimpse of the things that used to be there
 are mirrored in two or three things.
 But even the shadows of that splendid
 hustle and bustle, grace and grandeur
 is no longer seen now.
 I have not felt glad in viewing all this
 Only tears, sad tears have come up to my eyes.”

Then they went away in silence and tears. The visitors book of Amar Mahal will carry these historic words forever in its pages which would remind the posterity of deep emotions of the Maharaja and the singer—both of whom were rulers—one, ruled on his subjects, while the other, on the hearts of the rulers”, wrote Arun Joshi the journalist, in Kashmir Times, Jammu dated

Sept. 25, 1988.

Afterwards, Th. Karam Singh, the Supervisor, informed the author that both she and her daughter-in-law, who was accompanying her, were accorded a grand reception during this visit. When they passed through the famous and historic Rughnath Bazaar, flower petals were showered on them and she had to pass through archways built especially to greet her. Jammu offered to her scores of gifts and souvenirs for she had brought the name of Jammu on the world map of vocal music.

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Maharaja Hari Singh : Social Reformer Extraordinary

The soldier of fortune from the Jammu hills was resplendent in the glittering crown of a Maharaja. He was Maharaja Gulab Singh, who ruled over Jammu, Kashmir, Ladakh and Baltistan, etc. He was the founder of the united and compact State of Jammu and Kashmir. His dynasty continued to rule over it for more than a century (1846-1952).

Maharaja Gulab Singh's genius winged in two distinct realms of achievement; he was as great a statesman as a soldier. To these, he owed his meteoric rise. His reign may be termed as an 'Age of Conquests'. His conquests were the most fruitful events in Indian history.

It was left to his son and successor, Maharaja Ranbir Singh, to construct an edifice on his strong foundation. Maharaja Ranbir Singh's rule was an 'Age of Consolidation' and 'enlightenment'. Schools and colleges were opened. *Maktabs* and *Pathshallas* were revived. Libraries were established and the Dharmarth Trust was formed. He codified laws and promulgated the Ranbir Penal Code. Subsidies were granted to repair mosques and churches. He was also a patron of literature and a great builder of temples.

Maharaja Pratap Singh (1885-1925) succeeded his father. His

was an 'Age of Modernisation'. The two trunk roads, Jhelum Valley Road and Banihal Cart Road, were completed during his time. The Sialkot-Jammu Railway was thrown open to traffic in 1890. The land revenue settlement was done under the able supervision of Walter Lawrence. Many roads and canals were constructed and the Food Control Department was set up.

Maharaja Hari Singh ascended the throne on the death of his uncle Maharaja Pratap Singh on September 23, 1925. He rose as a luminous star on the firmament of reformation in Indian history. His age was primarily an 'Age of Reformation'.

In the first public speech in January, 1926, he declared : "If I am considered worth governing this State, then I will say that for me, all communities, religions and races are equal. As a ruler, I have no religion; all religions are mine and my religion is justice. It is possible that while dispensing justice, I may commit mistakes. To err is human. One who says that he does not commit a mistake is not speaking truth. Only God is free from error. My duty is to look at every one with equality. I shall, as far as possible, work with justice."¹

He realised that social justice was the most important and significant in human affairs. The Maharaja did his best in the field of social reform, and he naturally clashed with orthodox people. While he worked for progress, the orthodox were all for reaction. But he faced it and overcame the opposition.

Much earlier than Maharaja Hari Singh, Raja Ram Mohan Roy, and much later, Mahatma Gandhi, had tried to eradicate untouchability. But they had not been able to wipe it out completely even after their best efforts.

Maharaja Hari Singh had studied in Ajmer and was nourished on Western progressive and liberal ideas. He had studied books on history, politics and social subjects, and had realised that our society condemned the Harijans to a life of filth and degradation. They lived in hovels, yet they continued to render valuable services to the society for a mere pittance. Even the small minority of Harijans, he said, should feel secure, happy and free, and with his characteristic zeal, set the force of his great personality in support of upliftment of the Harijans.

The depressed classes in the State were subjected to great humiliation. Harijans were not allowed to draw water from a common well or tank and their children could not study in schools where upper class children received education. This discriminatory treatment was obnoxious and pernicious and the Maharaja could not allow such treatment to be meted out to this section of his subjects.

He, therefore, ordered that no discrimination should be shown to the depressed classes in any of the Government institutions and threw open all public wells, tanks, temples and schools to them. The district officers had orders that they should supervise and see that these instructions were followed in letter and spirit, and those who violated them were punished.

Doors of Temples Opened to Harijans

Maharaja Hari Singh made a formal proclamation on October 31, 1932 in which he declared that the Harijans would be allowed to enter and worship in all the temples.²

He also ordered that the proclamation should be published in the Gazette Extraordinary of the Government and that the order should be communicated to the Minister for Religious Institutions, Head Pujaris of Raghunath Temples, at Srinagar and Jammu for information of the public (Ref. Govt. Gazette, December 6, 1934). The proclamation was vociferously opposed by the priests. The Head Priest of the Raghunath Temple, Jammu, resigned in protest. The Maharaja had great regard for the Head Pujari as he had been associated with the Dogra House for many years, and made efforts to dissuade him from giving up the job. But the Pujari was adamant. The Maharaja accepted his resignation but did not withdraw the proclamation. This decision of Maharaja Hari Singh earned him the unprecedented credit of being the first ruler in India to have taken such a bold step for the emancipation of the Harijans.

Upliftment of Harijans³

Maharaja Hari Singh was intelligent enough to realise that these reforms had no value for men with empty stomach. So, economic

assistance was also granted to the depressed classes. Their children were granted special scholarships and preferential treatment was accorded to them in recruitment to various Government services. Seats were reserved for their representatives in local bodies and the State Legislature called Praja Sabha, when it was established later on.

Child Marriages Unlawful⁴

Maharaja Hari Singh had heard many horrifying stories of child marriages particularly in the Hindu society. It was considered a two-edged sword which caused many health hazards to the couple. If the girl became a child-widow, then under the Hindu custom, she could not remarry. Thus, great misery was caused to her as a result of this evil custom. Maharaja Hari Singh, soon after his accession to the throne, enacted a law in 1928 called the *Infant Marriages Prevention Regulation*, under which the age of Marriage for girls was fixed at a minimum of 14 years and for boys a minimum of 18 years. If anyone was found following the previous practice of marrying the child below these ages or sided or abetted such marriages, he was imprisoned for one year with a fine which could extend upto Rs. 1,000. At the same time, this law forbade incompatible marriages that a man above 50, marrying a girl below 15, would make the man and his father-in-law, besides their accomplices, liable to be punished with imprisonment upto four years with or a fine which could be extended to Rs. 2,000. This salutary measure paved the way for ending the child and unequal marriages and thus it brought peace and happiness to the people of the State.

Widow Remarriage⁵

A Hindu woman, howsoever young, could not remarry when her husband died. In 1933, Maharaja Hari Singh passed a law whereby a widow had the right to remarry without any hurdles. The purpose of this law was explained by His Highness in these words :

“In spite of the fact that a lot of change has come in the Hindu society and the majority of Hindus feel that for the Hindu widows to remarry is right, still some people consider widow

remarriage harmful for the Hindu society at large. Taking into consideration the fact that parts of India are also advancing, it is in my opinion that there should be no restriction on Hindu widows marrying again. This widow re-marriage would result in the benefit of the public.”

Prohibition of Polygamy⁶

Maharaja Hari Singh decried polygamy among Hindus. Moreover, from ancient times, there was a tradition among the Buddhists of Ladakh that all the brothers of one family could marry one woman, and a married woman had a right to keep another husband with or without the consent of her husband or husbands. In 1941, a law was made whereby it was considered a crime for a woman to keep more than one husband.

Prostitution Suppressed

Another law was passed in 1934 which was called the *Suppression of Immoral Traffic in Women Regulation*⁷ by which the brothels were closed and public prostitution was considered immoral, a sin and grave offence. It was very difficult to execute this law. But, the Maharaja was determined to do away this course. So, he adopted measures whereby these unfortunate and outcast women could either be absorbed in respectable families or were given training in some kind of handicraft which would make them economically self-supporting.

The Demand for Rum Illegal

The Maharaja got a law passed by the Praja Sabha in 1940 whereby none could accept “Rum”, a certain amount of cash, kind, land and cattle which was taken from the side of bridegroom by the bride’s side at the time of betrothal or marriage.⁸ To obtain “Rum” was now regarded as an offence and punishable under law.

Infanticide Among the Rajputs

The custom of infanticide was long prevalent among the Rajputs. The moment a girl was born, she was strangled to death and buried inside the compound of the house. The original cause of

this heinous crime was an economic one. The poor among the Rajputs could not afford to pay the heavy dowry demanded by the parents of the boy. This practice was prevalent even during the time of Maharaja Hari Singh. So, he proclaimed that for every daughter born in a Rajput family, her parents would be granted an acre of State land and financial help at the time of her marriage. The Maharaja also established a regular fund, called Dhandevi Memorial Fund, in memory of his deceased wife, for this purpose. In this way, the sinful practice was eradicated.

Smoking Among Children⁹

In 1929, Maharaja Hari Singh promulgated a law called the *Juvenile Smoking Regulation* whereby smoking among young children was forbidden and any boy below 16 years of age could not sell tobacco.

Reforms Among the Rajput Community¹⁰

There were some caste distinctions among the Rajputs. The Maharaja had done away with the distinction of high class and low class system prevailing among them. He declared that the Rajputs, whether high or low, could sit together and interdine. There was a strange tradition among the Rajputs according to which, if a Rajput tilled the land, he could not marry his son to the daughter of Suvaran Rajputs, though he could give away his daughter to them. In order to stop this practice, Maharaja Hari Singh held a function and himself ploughed the land in front of an assembled crowd at the Ranbir Mahal, Jammu. He issued strict orders "that there should be no distinction between one Rajput and another one so far as social status and social intercourse were concerned.

Discrimination Against Women¹¹

Maharaja Hari Singh was a staunch advocate of the educational system and girls' education. He opened girls schools and allowed the girls to receive higher education. There was no bar in their entry in the Government services. Many women were appointed on Government jobs, mostly in the education and medical

departments. A separate branch of the Education Department was also established for the advancement of girls' education.

Medical Reforms

As Maharaja Hari Singh wished that more and more people should receive free medical aid, he reformed the whole medical system, which is detailed in a separate chapter.

Respect for All Religions

Maharaja Hari Singh avowed that all religions were equal before God. He was, therefore, tolerant towards all religions and there was complete freedom of religion in the State. He used to participate in the festivities and religious functions of all the religions and respected their sentiments. At the time of 'Id' festival, he used to visit the 'Id' ground and congratulate the Muslims and remained there as long as they were engaged in the worship. His cosmopolitan and liberal outlook surpassed all in those times of narrow vision. It is since then that participating in each other's religious functions has been continuing which helps in the emotional integration.

Maharaja Hari Singh was indeed a pioneer in many respects. He was eager to make his state a welfare one. He was loved by his subjects and he challenged the Government of India later on to have a referendum on this matter. His flaw, if it was one was his love for self-respect and dignity.

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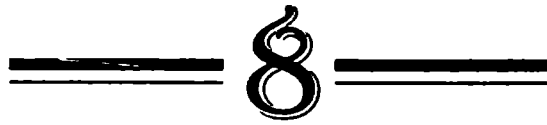
The Summer

*“That I to manhood am arriv’d near,
That some more timely-happy spirits endu’th
It shall be still in strict measure ev’n
To that same lot, however mean, or high,
Towards which time leads me, and the will of Heav’n
All is, if I have grace to use it so,
As ever in my great Task-Master’s eye.”*

—John Miller

*“Only the actions of the just
Smell sweet and blossom in their dust.”*

—John Shirley



Agriculture the Peasant : Backbone of the Society

The State of Jammu and Kashmir presents sharp contrasts of soil and climate ranging from the rich alluvial plains of the Jhelum Valley to the arid and stony tracts of the sub-mountainous region, where the land mocks at men and wily nature toys with their future. The Tibetan and semi-Tibetan division of Ladakh has vast stretches of uninhabited land where no trace of man and vegetation is found for miles on end. The climate of the State varies from arctic cold to tropical heat. Mountains and forests do dominate the geographical milieu and strictly limit the cultivable area, although the emphasis on agriculture as means of livelihood is as strong as in the rest of India. Barring the hilly terrain, Jammu and Kashmir is an epitome of India in all essentials.

Sir Walter Lawrence was entrusted with the settlement of the Valley and completed his work in 1893. "By 1912, practically every tehsil and district in the State was either settled or in revision"¹, writes Bamzai, the historian. The maximum share of revenue was fixed at 30 per cent of the gross produce. The *begar*, compulsory labour for the Government, had altogether been abolished. But it pained the Maharaja that the peasant continued

to be poor, living in dilapidated houses and rickety cottages with a few household goods. Some of them were as poor as church mice.

Hari Singh had an analytical mind. He diagnosed the causes. The whole dissection of the severe problem revealed the existing cancer to the agricultural indebtedness. The *Sahukar* was the representative of the money lending business. He was an immemorable village bank which provided financial credit to the cultivator.

Rural economy centred round the cultivator, who became the object of the Maharaja's foremost care upon his accession to the throne. On the occasion of the *Raj Tilak*, the Maharaja, as said earlier, gave the concrete expression of his keen interest in the agricultural welfare by announcing a number of boons which included the abolition of restrictions on the removal of royal trees growing on agricultural land, collection of fuel and forest produce from rural forest land most important of State land equal to the extent to his original holding.

Shortly after the Raj Tilak ceremony, His Highness undertook extensive tours in his territories to acquaint himself firsthand with the conditions obtaining in the State and the requirements of the people. This gave him the much needed opportunity to study the peasant from close quarters and what struck him most was that even after the settlement of the Valley done by Sir Walter Lawrence in 1893 and that by 1912, practically every tehsil and district in the State was settled. The maximum State revenue was fixed at 30 per cent of the gross produce. But still the farmers were poor.

The causes of this malignant growth of poverty convinced him that the exploitative economy accepted as a normal routine of money lending business was responsible for the economic servitude of the farmers. The *Sahukar* was the real enemy of the peasant; once the cultivator entered his premises, he was like a fly in a spider's parlour. Borrowing from the moneylender in brief, tantamounted to a life sentence.

This revelation hurt the Maharaja's humanity and he decided forthwith to dislodge the money lender from his fatal grip.² This

resolve of the Maharaja took the concrete form of the Agricultural Relief Act.

The Agricultural Relief Act was sanctioned in July, 1926 and applied to persons earning their livelihood wholly or principally by agriculture or by horticultural or pastoral pursuits included in its ambit of agricultural labourers. The court was empowered to open and examine any current account between the creditor and the debtor from 1 Baisakh, 1918, ignoring any settlement of contract between the parties purporting to close previous dealings and create a new obligation; to disallow any accumulated interest converted into principal at any intermediate settlement of account; to allow interest at the stipulated rate of interest or its absence, at the rate considered fair by the court not exceeding 12% per annum; to evaluate payments in kind at Tehsil rates for the month during which such payments were made and to credit the value to the debtor; to spread the balance due from the debtor over a number of equitable instalments in accordance with the paying capacity of the debtor; to vary the number and alter the amount of instalment if the paying capacity fluctuates.

The act which was designed to regulate money lending in a wholesome, healthy channel, created an unprecedented commotion in the Sahukar. Mammoth meetings were held, elaborate memorials drawn up, deputations organised and press and platform pressed into service for securing repeal of the Act that threatened to end their heartless tyrannies and underhand tactics. But, to what avail? The Man of Iron Will, who had dedicated himself to the cause of suffering humanity would not suffer any further exploitation of the have-nots and postpone their economic emancipation any longer. The waves of ex-Sahukar fury lashed the rock of the Maharaja's determination and subsided into sullen silence.

We cannot blink the fact that the money lending profession was virtually a Hindu monopoly, while in agriculture, Muslims predominated. The moneylender commanded a weight and influence and his influence to the ruler was a valuable asset. No autocrat would willingly lose a firm and powerful ally and encumber himself with a positive liability of the peasant who was nothing better than a cripple and required the crutches of the

Government aid to stand on his feet, and who could foretell if he would not turn upon his benefactor when restored to healthy vigour. An exasperated *Sahukar* did exclaim, "we shall see how Maharaja Hari Singh can now control his Muslim subjects and the exclamation almost proved prophetic. But the Maharaja looked upon himself as the guardian of his subjects' welfare which was his foremost *dharma* to protect and foster in every way.

The *Sahukar* was a powerful adversary, and though he had been floored, he would not acknowledge his defeat and soon marshalled his resources for another bout. He decided to boycott financing the peasant, concluding and rightly so, that mere relief from indebtedness was not enough. The Act was, at the most, a passive help and unless an alternative sources of credit were accessible to the peasant, he could not maintain his economic independence for long and would have to knock at his door willy-nilly. But *Sahukar* was counting the eggs before they were hatched. Maharaja was not a man who took half-measures. He had anticipated the contingency and forestalled the *Sahukar* by an introduction and intensification of the campaign for expansion of co-operative credit. An army of officers had been employed to educate the farmer in principles of co-operative credit and its potentialities for his multisided welfare and before long, the State was honeycombed with societies which brought credit facilities at the very door of the cultivator.

These societies which number over 4,000 with a rupee capital exceeding a crore had done marvellous work. They taught the cultivator to husband his resources with thrift and prudence and introduced a market change in his outlook on life. Credit facilities were further supplemented by the Government aid in the form of loan for the improvement of land.

The aid to Agriculturist and Land Improvement Act of 1936³ makes provision for grant of loans by the Government for agricultural improvements and for relief of distress among zamindar. The term "improvement" applies to every considerable work which adds to the letting value of land and a "distress" applies to any extraordinary calamity affecting agricultural operation or resources. The maximum period for the payment of

loan for improvement works was twenty years, the actual period being determined by consideration of the durability of the work for which it was granted and expediency of the cost of the work being paid by the generation of persons who were immediately benefitted by the work. The increase in output attendant on improvements was kept exempt from assessment. The loan was suspended in part or remitted in full, if circumstances so required.

Subsidiary Occupation : The cultivator experiences a recurrent cycle of hyper-activity and idleness and this enforced leisure, if not turned to some lucrative end, neutralises his improvements by consuming his reserves.

The necessity of providing subsidiary occupation for the agriculturist has thus been a crying need at all times.

Mahatma Gandhi advocated *charkha* and spinning as sole specifics for rural poverty and distress. Maharaja Hari Singh's Government started poultry farming, cocoon-rearing, epiculture, spinning and weaving, and sheep-breeding as alternative industries for the zamindars. Cocoon rearing in particular brings lakhs of rupees to the cultivators at their very doors and they need not search for a market for their produce which is consumed by the silk factories working under the State control. For spinning and weaving, a peripatetic weaving party was organised which went from village to village demonstrating improved methods of weaving and encouraging zamindars to adopt them. The poultry and bee-keeping classes were held on the Government farm and private enterprise in both the directions was subsidised. A special sheep-breeding farm was set up at Banihal and it resulted in the production of better quality wool. Taking together these measures, they assured the financial salvation for the cultivators.

Another epoch-making event in the life of the peasant's life was the gift of propriety rights by the Maharaja to millions of cultivators who held land directly under the State. From times immemorial, the ownership of land in the valley, the frontier districts and parts of the Jammu province was vested in the State, and the cultivator was no better than a serf. He could not call the plot of land with which his existence was bound up indissolubly his own and could neither sell nor mortgage it, nor could he claim

protection against arbitrary ejection. The Maharaja, who had pledged himself to the universal equity of man, abolished by transferring to him propriety rights without charging any *Nazrana* in lieu of them. This munificence converted a serf into a self-respecting social unit and would ever shine brightly in the brilliant record of his enlightened regime.

Lest this metamorphosis of the peasant should inebriate him into squandering his rich possession and thus inflict permanent injury on himself, his right to alienate land for the first ten years was restricted to a quarter of his holding.

To prevent expropriation of the landed proletariat by the landless gentry, lists of castes and tribes, dependent for livelihood on the exploitation of the soil, was drawn up districtwise and transaction of land restricted within their circle by statute.

The Alienation of Land Act of 1938 prohibited permanent alienation in favour of a non-agriculturist, while temporary alienation in favour of a non-agriculturist took the form of usufructuary mortgage with or without possession of land limited to a maximum of 20 years, on the expiry of which the land automatically reverted to the mortgager free from encumbrance.

The mortgager was at liberty to redeem the land at any time during the currency of the mortgage on payment of a reasonable sum. Many alienations purporting to be conditional sale of land were legally invalid and could be set aside by the *Wazir Wazarat* of his motion in favour of usufructuary mortgage to whatsoever period it related. The produce of land could not be leased for a term exceeding five years.

Land, agricultural implements, cattle, household utensils and grain stocks for family requirements were declared non-attachable.

The purchase of agricultural land and village immovable property was vested in the agricultural community in 1936. The cumulative effect of these measures was to raise the cultivators' status so as to bring it at par with that of the workers in other occupations and to erect a solid protecting wall.

Consolidation of Holding : The epidemic of partitioning land into small uneconomic slices was combated by propaganda and advice among zamindars and a Consolidation Officer was

appointed to take up the work of consolidating fragmented holdings. The work was broadbased on the consent of the people and compensation, wherever due, was paid. Besides this, several co-operative societies were doing useful work in this direction as already stated.

Better Farming : The Department of Agriculture guides the cultivator to better farming by demonstrating improved methods to better methods of cultivation of crops and fruit plants at its model farms by giving technical training and advice to the sons of the zamindars, and by distributing improved seeds, saplings, implements and manure to zamindars. After successful experimentation, the Department introduced high variety of wheat, sugar-cane and other corns, vegetables and fruits. This has resulted in a higher output of crops. To stimulate competition for better farming, exhibitions and shows of agricultural produce are held annually at important places and prizes are awarded for outstanding success. The imports of agricultural implements and machinery are exempted from customs duty and the duration of the settlement operations have been extended to 40 years to remove the lurking fear of the State appropriating any fraction of the increase in income consequent upon improved husbandry.

Horticulture

The soil and climate of Kashmir favour the growth of fruits and vegetables and Kashmir is renowned for the beauty, variety and lusciousness of her fruits, which find a ready welcome in the most fastidious markets of India. Horticulture had inexhaustible possibilities for the Kashmir peasant and invaluable adjunct to agriculture in promoting the prosperity of the peasant who is fully alive to its importance and utilises every available space including the edges of his field and irrigation channels for planting fruit trees. The wiser farmer prefers horticulture to agriculture as the former is much more remunerative and once the orchard comes into bearing, and it involves comparatively little outlay and labour for maintenance. Moreover the Horticulture Department is ready to help the farmer at every stage of the operations and it enables him to surmount with ease the difficulties of finding capital for

planting up the fruit areas which may be said to be practically non-existent in Kashmir, for besides the Government loan, the Government nurseries annually distribute lakhs of plants of exotic growth to improve indigenous varieties acclimatised in the valley, to the farmer at a nominal price of one anna per plant. The manure is abundant and can be had for asking or at ridiculously cheap rates. The farmer's part is chiefly confined to the protection of the plantation. Nature and the Government do the rest for him.

The transport facilities are satisfactory to the rail-head whence it finds its way to its destination by train. The grower usually sells the crop on the tree and its transport and sale becomes the concern of the buyer. The produce is graded on ripening and part of it is put and consumed in the home market, and high grade fruits are invariably reserved for export to distant markets where they fetch higher prices. Some varieties of fruits such as cherries prefer the comfort of home and perish of home sickness if obliged to leave Kashmir on a long journey but air transport is helping them to overcome their shyness.

Preservation of fruits has, of late, made marked progress in Kashmir and apples which formerly disappeared from the market in a few months after the harvest can be in stalls all the year round. In the exhibition at Srinagar, fruits have special stalls allotted to them.

Vegetable gardening outstrips even fruit cultivation so far as material prospects are concerned, for vegetables figure prominently in the Indian dietary. The Agricultural Department has done wonderful work in improving vegetables both in quality and variety in Kashmir.

Production of vegetable seeds have opened up new vista of profitable activity for the gardener. More than 500 farms, covering an area of one thousands acres, sprung into existence. Their lucrativeness may be judged from the fact that in the first year, they were valued at Rs. 2,87,000.

The Plant and Crop Protection Act of 1933

This law was passed to protect the standing fruit trees and new plantation from pests and diseases. The District Agricultural Officer

was authorised to destroy all bulbs, plants, parts of plants infected with disease and to prevent their export or transport from one place to the other. The imports are to have similar restrictions and are required to be accompanied with health certificates from the place of their origin. The Plant Protection Committee, consisting of official reports of insect pests, fungal diseases crop or noxious weeds, suggests appropriate remedial measures, inspects and prohibits sale of infected crops or produce and destroys or disinfects it, as considered proper.

Livestock

Livestock rules the destiny of the cultivator as it represents the power that drives agricultural machinery. Hereditary and healthy environment largely determine its efficiency and working capacity, and the comparatively low yield of crops and milk in our country is directly attributable to poor quality of cattle and heavy loss of livestock by disease and dreaded scourge of rinderpest, foot-and-mouth disease, etc., which is one of the main causes of peasant's indebtedness and poverty.

During the period of Maharaja's rule, various schemes were undertaken for the improvement of livestock. A large number of bulls of *Dhani* and *Singhi* breeds were imported from India and distributed to zamindars in selected centres free of cost. *The Livestock Improvement Act* prohibited unlicensed keeping of bulls of defective or inferior conformation, etc., which were unsuitable for begetting superior progeny for breeding purpose and empowered the Veterinary Department to castrate scabbe bulls. Besides cattle breeding farms, centres were started for horse and bull-breeding. Incentive for improvement of livestock was given by holding livestock shows at different places every year where prizes were awarded to the best animals.

Veterinary hospitals with accommodation for in-patient and veterinary dispensaries were opened in cities and tehsil head quarters; district rural areas were served by itinerant doctors.

A veterinary laboratory was established at Srinagar for producing vaccine for treatment and immunisation work against rinderpest. A Disease Investigation Officer was appointed to

conduct necessary investigation in important diseases and their incidence in the country.

The Prevention of Cruelty to Animals Act of 1934 made a person liable to be punished for inflicting unnecessary pain on an animal in whatever manner. The use of cow for dragging the plough and performance of the operation called "Phuka" upon a cow were declared punishable.

The volume of work done by the Veterinary Department may be judged from the fact that in one year, 3,19,161 animals were treated in hospitals and 1,42,875 animals in villages. The veterinary doctors toured 1,42,875 villages.

Rural Reconstruction

In 1935, the foundation stone of Panchayati Raj in the villages was laid by passing of the *Village Panchayat Act*. Two years later, a separate Department for Rural Reconstruction was created. The valuable work done by this department in conjunction with the Panchayats will be clear from the following summary culled from Government publications :

The establishment of Panchayats in the villages of the State under the Panchayat Act received a great fillip since 1937 with the creation of a separate Department of Rural Department (Handbook 1945). To start with, the Government sanctioned a lumpsum of Rs. 40,000 per annum for the execution of improvement works. The grant was raised to a lakh later. Subsequently, the grant of Rs. 40,000 provided for the kandi water supply was transferred to this Department raising the total to Rs. 140,000. In *Samvat* 1999, the grant stood at 2 lakhs of rupees. Panchayats do not merely decide petty cases. They are engaged in the work of rural reconstruction and are co-operating with the Government in the matter of execution of improvement schemes in rural areas. Besides providing free labour for construction of village roads and sinking of wells and similar other works, the Panchayats also made cash contributions for these public utility works. Villagers are also contributing towards the purchase of rural community radio sets, digging of wells, laying of village streets, construction of drains and linking of villages by fair

weather roads. In the domain of health and sanitation and anti-epidemic work, Panchayats have especially shown good results. Cleanliness weeks have been celebrated and houses, compounds, lanes, springs and bath rooms have been constructed in a number of villages. Thousands of manure and soaking pits were dug and a large number of drains prepared. Cattle ponds have been opened in several Panchayat areas and vehicle stands and slaughter houses have also been provided. Carefully planned campaigns in Jammu province have now become a regular feature of the activities in the better distribution of seeds and poultry to zamindars under the guidance of Agriculture Department. Extensive work has been carried on by the Rural Development Department in the cause of village upliftment. Comprehensive economic surveys were launched with a view to understanding the causes of economic, social and cultural backwardness of the rural population. Over 3,000 villagers were surveyed upto the middle of 1944.

Among the matters receiving the attention of the Department was the development of the decaying village industries and propaganda for adult education.

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9

Industry, Trade and Urban Upliftment

The origin of the arts and crafts of the State is shrouded in mystery, yet their prosperity has roots in historic reality. It was Sultan Zain-ul-Abidin, who revived the industries which had almost dwindled and some of them altogether disappeared. Mohibul Hassan¹ in his book *Kashmir under the Sultans*, says that the world famous arts and crafts developed and flourished under his loving patronage and he invited the master artisans from Samarkand, Bukhara and Persia. The Sultan, according to Srivara, the chronicler, provided all the amenities of life to them and encouraged these foreign craftsmen and since then Kashmir arts and crafts have found their way to different countries. Josephine is said to have received the present of Kashmiri shawl from Napoleon Bonaparte.

The interest of the masses, which include manufacturers and traders, artisans and craftsmen, or owners of houseboats and boatmen and skilled and unskilled has not been lost sight of. The traditional artisan exhibits it in diverse forms. These are silverware, papier mache, wood carving, carpets and wool products like *lois* and blankets, silk production, paper manufacturing, leather

production, etc. There was ebb and flow in these trades because of the famines and epidemics.

Now the two highways, Jhelum Valley Road and Banihal Cart Road and the rail link from the plains upto Jammu made it possible to market these articles to the outside world. Besides, large number of visitors who came to the Valley, made good purchases of these small-scale and cottage industries.

Taxes on boatmen had, in certain cases, been reduced or remitted. The Government encouraged indigenous goods by holding industrial exhibitions in Srinagar and Jammu since 1929. The exhibitions attract a large number of people including visitors with the result that not only have there been greater sales, but there has been marked improvement in the variety and finish of the goods produced. In order to provide assistance in manufacturing the goods in the State, an industrial museum and sales emporium was opened at Srinagar towards the end of 1941. A smaller institution was opened at Jammu as well.

The sericulture industry, which is a Government monopoly, received subsidies and these provide employment to thousands of labourers. The silk filature in Srinagar is the largest of its kind in the world. A special quality of raw silk has been produced in Kashmir. The rearing of cocoons for silk provides employment for thousands of houses. High class carpets are manufactured and exported to Europe and America. The industry continued to receive a subsidy from the Government.

The Department of Industries was established in 1923 to develop industries in the State.² Some of the established industries were match factory, sheep breeding farm, woollen mill, silk weaving factory, Hal-wrought Factory at Baramulla, drug research laboratory, Kashmir willows, sugar mill, lignite factory, tannery and sanotonine factory and pottery factory. The Jammu and Kashmir Bank was established, which reflects prospects of these and other industries.

Forest industries provide large scope of employment for men. The Forest Department has shown good results. The net revenue of the Department for 1944-45 was Rs. 79.25 lakhs. Cultivation of pyrethrum has made good progress. The rosine and turpine factory at Miran Sahib is also progressing.

The Urban Upliftment

Let us turn to the panorama of urban life.

Here too, the restless spirit of the Maharaja is seen feverishly moulding the destiny of his people and gilding their future. The town-dweller relies mainly on Government service, trade and commerce and industry for his subsistence. Let us review the changes made in each of the spheres.

Government Service : Before Maharaja Hari Singh began to steer the ship of the State, Government services were a monopoly of outsiders and the appointment of a State subject on a responsible post was nothing short of a miracle. In the first place, the local people were comparatively backward in education and had not the ghost of a chance to compete successfully with the outsiders who generally held their qualifications to ridicule. But if some enterprising young man did succeed in befitting himself for office, he was repulsed by the Maginot Line of foreign vested interests and driven from pillar to post, till he cajoled some influential outsider into good humour. Only then he could sneak his way in subordinate ranks in service. Even this back-door admission was a favour—a symbol of generosity of the outsider. The State subject was, thus, a social entity and a political pariah in his own home. This was intolerable to Maharaja Hari Singh and on April 20, 1927—a red-letter-day in the annals of the State—His Highness promulgated the State subject definition order—a Magna Carta of the people of the State. This order divided the people into three classes according to the length of their residence in the State. In the matter of grant of State scholarships, State land for agricultural and residential purpose and recruitment to State Service, class first could claim preference over class second and so on. Any outsider could acquire the status of a State subject on purchasing immovable property after ten years continuous stay in the State.

The Accountant General was directed not to entertain the salary bill of a fresh entrant in the Government service unless accompanied by a hereditary State subject certificate.

The tables were turned. With a stroke of the pen, His Highness had endowed the political pigmy of a State subject with a towering

status that inflamed his former master. This marked the dawn of political consciousness in the State subject. His ambition to take his original place in the administration of his country was its inevitable corollary.

But his benefactor, the Maharaja, had to pay heavily for it. The outside element, to whom it was a bolt from the blue, did not take it lying down. A whirlwind campaign for its annulment was initiated; press and platform began to resound with fiery fulminations against the Maharaja; plans for fomenting trouble in the State began to take shape in secret conclaves. But the Maharaja was impervious to threats and criticisms, and all attempts to cause disruption failed. On the inauguration of the Praja Sabha, the offensive for securing cancellation of the order or at least its suitable modifications, was resumed but His Highness was obdurate and discountenanced all moves for change in the definition that would injure the interests of his subjects. The domiciled community like the defeated *Sahukar* became in the end an inveterate enemy of the Maharaja.

What better proof can there be of a ruler's solicitude for his people? This definition was the seed from which material, moral and political advancement of the people sprouted later on. Without it, the local people would have been fossilised under the avalanche of foreign vested interests. It exceeded the Agricultural Relief Act or any subsequent measure in its comprehensive effects as it embraced all classes of people living in the State and made them masters of their home. It is because of this order that the State subject now means the services and plays a leading role in trade, industry and other walks of life. Surely, the State subject ought to be too grateful to the Maharaja who deliberately incurred unpopularity, for raising him from cipher to full manly dignity.

Industry : The policy of strangulating Indian industry in the interests of home manufacture by the East India Company had its repercussions on Kashmir and brought about industrial decadence.

It must, however, be remembered that even in the heyday of their prosperity, these handicrafts were not run on a large scale or on co-operative basis, but were carried on by individual operatives or family groups, isolated in their villages as small cottage

concerns, on the basis of hereditary skill and knowledge. The possibility of contact with the outside world and consequent increment to inherited knowledge was ruled out by the comparative lack of easy and safe means of communications and it was only with the advent of the Dogra rule that a beginning to put industry on a systematic basis was made in right earnest.

Communications : The provision of adequate marketing facilities is a *sine qua non* of industrial revival and marketing facilities are interlinked with means of transport. The Dogra rulers, therefore, rightly concentrated their foremost attention on the construction of roads and bridges, and opening up the country to trade and traffic. Road-building may well be said to be an obsession with Maharaja Hari Singh. Stupendous physical obstacles fail to damp his ardour in this direction³. The B.C. Road, which, in conjunction with the J.V. Road upto Domel, has a pride of place among the mountain roads of the world, was opened during the reign of Maharaja Pratap Singh, but its broadening, cutting of curves, etc., has been receiving the constant attention of Maharaja Hari Singh. This road is partly blocked by snowfall in the winter months and Hari Singh's Government purchased a heavy plough and bull-dozer for clearance of snow. The Leh Treaty Road, which connects Ladakh and Central Asia, and the the Bandipore-Bhaderwah Road were thrown open for the first time. Bhaderwah, reputed as miniature Kashmir and Pattani Sanasar Road are a few of the other important roads of which a network has spread in recent years.

Besides the roads, two important bridges, one over the Tawi at Jammu and the other over Chenab at Akhnoor, were built at a cost of Rs. 8 lakhs.⁴ The latter has the largest unsupported span in India. The Beripattan Bridge was undertaken, but collapsed on nearing completion. Telegraph, telephone and wireless services were simultaneously developed. The State was now linked with the outside world by up-to-date scientific means of communications and her products—both agricultural and industrial—command an extensive market. The only limitation, if any, is the capacity of her people for development.

The Human Factor in Industry

The human factor, which counts the most in the march of progress, was, however, marked by general illiteracy and ignorance and it was necessary to raise the standard of intelligence and efficiency before any appreciable advance in industries could be contemplated. I have recorded the various active measures initiated by Hari Singh to hasten the promotion of education and enlightenment of the people inhabiting the State. The foundation having been firmly laid, the time was now ripe for an aggressive attack on the industrial backwardness prevailing in the State.

Resources of the State

The agricultural, forest and mineral resources of the State gave a reasonable hope for the success of the State in a fairly large number of organised industries. But, it was necessary to establish an Industries Department under a competent director who could offer advice to budding industries on the technical aspects of their plans and help them in the selection and purchase of suitable plants. This was accomplished first.

Aid to Industries Act

The Aid to Industries Act, passed by His Highness in 1935, marked a real epoch in the industrialisation of the State. Under this Act, a Board of Industries consisting of ten members, of whom two were to be local industrialists and four non-official members of the Assembly, with the power to co-opt local and technical experts, was constituted to consider applications for aids received from persons in business or wishing to set up a new business and to advise the Government in the advisability of granting the aid. The Board was empowered to grant aid upto Rs. 3,000 in individual cases and to refer cases of higher grant to the Government. Aid may take the form of grant of loan, giving of State guarantee for certain amount to Bank, payment of subsidy for the conduct of research or purchase of machinery, etc. subscription to debentures, grant of land, raw material, or any other property of the State on favourable terms, imposing of export

duty on raw material or import duty on goods manufactured outside the State, exemption of raw material required for the industry from payment of customs import duty, etc. Generally, a number of concessions were combined in each case. The applicant for aid was required to furnish such details about his financial condition, the prospects of the concern, its certified profit and loss account, the initial outlay, etc., as were necessary to enable the Board to reach a decision on the feasibility of taking up the venture. The loan was advanced upon the security of a mortgage or a floating charge upon the whole or a part of the assets and in the event of the applicant's inability to furnish such security, the security of reliable parties was accepted. The loan was repayable in easy instalments within a maximum period of twenty years.

If the raw material required for a factory could not be produced in the State and had to be imported from outside, such raw material was kept exempt from payment of customs duty. The industrialist had, however, to satisfy the industries Department that the imported material was actually consumed in the factory and not black-marketed and disposed off at profit.

A Sugar Mill was set up in Ranbirsinghpura⁵ and cultivators were encouraged to enlarge the acreage under sugar cane by grant of substantial concession. Oil Mills were set up in Jammu and Srinagar for extraction of oil from oil seeds. A tannery was started by the Maharaja as a private pioneering concern. It was transferred to a private firm and its success stimulated into existence several boot manufacturers as individual enterprises.

Shri Karan Singh Woollen Mills, Srinagar was the first large-scale organised industry of its kind in the State and to feed it with better quality wool, a sheep-breeding farm was started in Banihal. The factory, the largest of its kind in the world, was expanded and developed new channels of activity. A factory for twisting silk yarn came into existence. An enterprise started distillation of wines and whisky and another manufactured alcohol from barley and oats. A rubber factory sprang up in Jammu. Several factories for manufacturing shovels, factory for distillation of Rosin and Turpentine, The Kashmir willows, which manufactured sports gear, a match factory, santonine factory, indianite factory, ice

factory, a factory dealing with barytas, plaster of paris, China clay and manufacturing paints, colours and varnishes, a concern for crushing gypsum and on top of all⁶, the drug research laboratory, engaged in the manufacture of tinctures and other standard medicines as a preliminary to the establishment of a National Drug Industry, are some other instances of organised large-scale industries which have come into being in the industrial catalogue of the State. The number of cottage and small-scale industries began to manufacture tweeds, blankets, shawls, wooden articles, silverware, knitted ware, metal works, ceramics, soaps, furniture articles paper machie, pencils, packing cases, jams, confectionery, etc. Cottage industries were in general put on a better footing by the formation of co-operative societies of artisans.

The working of coal on a small-scale was taken in hand in Jungle Gali and Kala Kot.⁷ The Agricultural Department took to extensive cultivation of pyrethrum.

Pisciculture : In certain springs and streams, and protected water, cultivation of trout was undertaken and proved an additional attraction to the angler tourists.

Tourist Industry

Of paramount attraction to Kashmir is her tourist industry, for thousands of tourists drawn from all parts of the world who come to the Valley for a holiday in summer, not only patronise her arts and crafts and stimulate trade but also provide means of livelihood to hotel keepers, *hanjis* and houseboat owners, labourers and guides and a number of persons engaged in allied occupations which cater to the tourists' needs and requirements. The tourist is inclined to spend and lakhs of rupees change hands during the tourist season to the economic benefit of local people. To attract them in large numbers, His Highness' Government chalked out a systematic programme for the provision of more amenities to tourists. Pahalgam, Gulmarg, Kokarang and other health resorts, which hum like a beehive in summer, were sanctified, improved and beautified. More and better huts and camping sites, drinking water facilities, etc., were provided. New beauty spots like Sanasar were discovered, opened to traffic and developed. In Srinagar, a

boulevard was constructed along the banks of the Dal Lake and the two islands in the lake improved. Traffic inspectors were appointed to attend to the convenience of visitors en route.

Shali Store

In 1929, the Food Control Act was passed to stabilise prices of foodgrains in the interest of the producer and the consumer in the Kashmir province, where landed magnates and grain merchants (Galladars) were in the habit of cornering grain and manoeuvring famine with a view to black market the commodity at abnormally high prices.

Town Areas

The principle of local self-government was extended to towns in 1940 by the Town Area Act passed in that year. Each town area had a committee of seven members inclusive of the Chairman, who managed its affairs. The objects of the Act were to provide better sanitation, supply of drinking water, lighting arrangements, medical relief, educational recreation by setting up libraries, reading rooms and installing radio sets, centres for adult education, town halls, etc.

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*Judiciary System—
“Justice is my Religion!”*

It was Maharaja Ranbir Singh, the grandfather of Maharaja Hari Singh, who first reorganised the judicial system in the State and a penal code was completed and issued in *Samvat* 1448 (1891-92) on the basis of Macaulay's Code in British India. It was called “Sri Ranbir Dandh Biddi”. This became the basis in Hari Singh's time also which was modified from time to time.

In 1928, there were 158 civil and criminal courts in the State and almost 400 advocates and pleaders, which later became double.

Maharaja Hari Singh was an intelligent and a well-read person. He knew that an independent judiciary provide the foundation for the superstructure of civil liberties and was the best insurance against encroachment on them. From the very outset, Hari Singh insisted on an impartial and efficient judicial system. In 1928, he established a High Court of Judicature which consisted of one Chief Justice and two puisne judges. Its first judges were Lala Kanwar Sen, M.A., Bar-at-law, Rai Bahadur Bodh Raj Sahni, B.A. LL.B., B.C.L. (Oxford), Bar-at-law and Khan Bahadur Aga Syed Hussain.

Organisation of Judiciary¹

The High Court had under it five District and Session Judges working at Jammu, Srinagar, Mirpur and Poonch. The Wazir of Ladakh exercised, in addition to his own portfolios, the powers of the District Magistrate. The District and Session Judges had under them the necessary contingent of subordinate judges. Two of them were designated Additional District Magistrates of Jammu & Kashmir Provinces. Under the subordinate judges were Munsiffs who were Magistrates class I. Under Sub-Divisional Magistrates (Wazir Wazarats) were the Tehsildars and Naib-Tehsildars exercising powers of class I, class II, and class III Magistrates. Besides these, certain Heads of Department, etc., also exercised powers of Magistrate of first class. They were Director of Tawaza, Chief Conservator of Forests, Divisional Forest Officers, Deputy Controller of Shikar Gah. The Director and Deputy Director Visitors, Bureau exercised summary powers under Section 260 (2), Criminal of Procedure Code.

Separation of Judiciary from the Executive : Large number of powers were delegated to the High Courts, etc., and, as a result of that, there was virtually a separation of judiciary from the Executive, except in lower magistracy and a few departmental magistrates. However, in Ladakh, the executive and judicial functions were carried by the Executive officials.

*Letters Patent*² : On 10th September, 1943, Maharaja granted Letters Patent to the High Court of Judicature similar to those of High Courts in India which put it on par with the sister courts in India, in point of prestige and status.

*Powers of High Court*³ : With the sanction of the Maharaja, the High Court made rules to regulate the working of the subordinate courts. It could make rules for the inspection and supervision of its subordinate courts and thus promote the efficiency and discipline among the judicial staff (The Legal Practitioner's Regulations, (1977, p.3).

It had also the powers to prescribe the qualification for advocates, vakils and attorney-at-law and remove or suspend them from practice (J & K Constitution Act of 1939, p. 21).

The powers of appointment and conferment of civil and criminal

powers vested on magistrates were vested in the High Court in 1928. However, the procedure continued upto 1946, when the Maharaja withdrew these powers and conferred the same on to the State Government. Thus, after 1946, it was the Government which invested the magistrates with criminal powers. So the High Court had no powers of punishment of judicial officers.

High Court was empowered to supervise the working of the subordinate judicial officers and kept a close watch on presiding officers of the courts. It also prepared monthly reviews of the work of subordinate courts, suggesting measures for improvement. The Chief Justice personally examined the papers of delay in civil and criminal cases pending over six and 3 months respectively.

Revenue appeals and revisions were first heard by Revenue Commissioner but now appeals against his orders were heard by a bench consisting of two judges.

In 1938, an order was issued separating the office of the Judicial Minister from the High Court and defining the duties of the former. The legislative work concerning the judiciary was entrusted to the Judicial Minister. His role was advisory in legal matters. However, appointments, promotions, transfers, leaves, etc. of the Judicial Department were decided by him on the recommendations of the High Court which controlled its own office establishment and those of subordinate courts.

The judges of the High Court and Chief Justice were appointed by the Maharaja. Prior to 1939, they had no fixed tenure and held office at the pleasure of the Maharaja. But, under the Jammu & Kashmir Constitution Act of 1939, they could hold office till the age of 55, but when the Letters Patent were issued, their age of retirement was raised to 65. Their salary, pension, etc., were determined by the Maharaja. Their qualification and experience were to be at par with the High Court Judges of the British India.

The High Court was also a court of record, court of reference and revision and heard all cases referred to it by the District and Session judges.

Setting of a Judiciary Advisory Board⁵ : Maharaja Hari Singh passed the Jammu and Kashmir Constitution Act of 1939. It was under this Act that the Board of Judicial Advisors was established

to advise His Highness as regards the disposal of judicial cases submitted to him. The Board discharged some functions in the State as were performed by the Privy Council in case of British India. In 1944, the Board consisted of the retired judges of the High Court of Allahabad. It has to be noted that His Highness never ignored the advice of the Board. The Prime Minister was the only channel of communication between him and the High Court.

As regards the question of jurisdiction to be exercised by the Board in civil matters, Hari Singh sought the advice of Tej Bahadur Sapru, the noted lawyer of the Allahabad High Court and approved his suggestions and the people were given the right to appeal to the Board in civil cases against the decision of the High Court in which the value of the suit was Rs. 5,000.

Maharaja Hari Singh made no discrimination against one or the other community. He was a just ruler and he amended the State law in 1936 in order to remove the clauses from the Statute Book under which capital punishment could not be awarded to Brahmins and Rajputs. He declared in 1936 that all were equal in the eyes of the law and that punishment would be inflicted on all those found guilty.

Prof. Hari Om⁵ writes, "As far as the Maharaja was concerned, he remained the fountain-head of all justice. The High Court Constitution of 1928, the Jammu and Kashmir Constitution Act of 1939 and the Letters Patent did not in any way affect the inherent powers of the Maharaja and his prerogative of pardon. He could also send for records of any case whether pending before or decided by the High Court or any court subordinate to it and pass orders thereon in accordance with the laws and usages of the rules and consonant with the dictates of justice, equity and good conscience."

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Education Expansion

There is no better barometer of Maharaja Hari Singh's good or bad intentions than his educational policy. An autocrat is anxious to keep his subjects in political bondage and thereby ward off injury to his personal interests; he will adopt an obstructionist attitude to the educational advancement of the people committed to his care. Several devices such as starving the educational effort financially, sterilising private enterprise in the field of education, choosing a medium of instruction repugnant to the people, etc., can be found to perpetuate intellectual impoverishment of the people. A democrat will, on the other hand, harness all available resources to the cause of education and will treat ignorance as the heaviest drag upon the progress of his country. He will try to create a series of schools of all standards; will subsidise liberally private agencies engaged in education; offer solid inducements to promising boys especially drawn from backward sections of the population; will provide cheap education and adopt other measures calculated to stimulate educational interest of the masses. For a decision on this point, no opinions or statements are necessary. Incontrovertible statistics tell their own tale.

Before Maharaja Hari Singh ascended the throne, there were two colleges in the State, one at Srinagar and the other at Jammu,

and 706 other educational institutions with a total roll of 44,601. The annual expenditure on education amounted to Rs. 10.75 lakhs. Hari Singh's accession was a signal for relentless war upon ignorance and illiteracy in which no quarter was given to the forces of darkness. Soon, the result was reflected in a striking increase in the number of college students which became too great to be efficiently handled by the existing colleges. The Srinagar College had to be bifurcated in 1942 into an Intermediate and Degree Colleges, but still, the rush was so heavy that several private colleges had to be subsidised into existence to absorb the surplus student population. In Jammu, Intermediate Colleges were started in Mirpur and Poonch to drain away part of the student population while a Mahila College in the city diverted the girl students to itself. The number of colleges rose from 2 to 11. The value of education, as an equipment for life, was beginning to be realised more and more.

*Primary Education*¹ : In 1930, the Government promulgated the Compulsory Primary Education Act which made it obligatory that all the children living in the State should receive free primary education in the numerous newly-established schools where poor and deserving students were provided with text books, uniforms and all other articles of stationery free of cost. In 1925, the number of such schools was only 706. It rose to 20,728 in 1945.

To ensure the success of the programme of compulsory education², the Maharaja created the post of Director of Education. Most of the Directors appointed were eminent educationists, hailing from outside the State. One such young and enthusiastic educationist was Mr. K.G. Saydain from the Aligarh Muslim University and the Maharaja entrusted him with the management of the entire education department. There was hardly a town or village with a population of over five hundred souls without a school.

*Basic Education*³ : The Maharaja appointed an Educational Reorganisation Committee under the presidentship of Mr. K.G. Saydain, the then Director of Education, who had served on the Basic Education Committee and with Dr. Zakir Hussain, who was the Chairman of that Committee, as one of the members, to

examine the suitability and adequacy of the existing system of primary and secondary education in the State and make recommendations for its improvement. The recommendations of the Committee included, besides acceleration of the pace of the primary stage and the introduction of many reforms in general at different stages—(1) the organisation of adult education, (2) the introduction of basic education in which craft teaching and book learning are closely integrated.

With the pursuance of the scheme or the introduction of basic education, a number of ordinary primary schools were converted into basic schools with proper staff and equipment.

*B.T. Class*⁴ : The Teachers' Training School, remodelled on the Reorganisation Committee's report, was started in Srinagar in October, 1938 and it trained a large number of teachers. Another training school for teachers was opened in Jammu as well.

*Adult Education*⁵ : The drive against illiteracy met with large success. There were over 4,000 adult literary centres in 1943 and about 55,000 adults were being made literate. About 28,000 were granted literary certificates. Of these 1,457 were women. Adult primers and readers were printed in Bodhi, in addition to Urdu, Devanagari and Gurmukhi. Simple Urdu had been made the medium of instruction for children in schools and they had the option to adopt the Devanagari or the Persian script. A vocabulary of simple Urdu had been prepared for the writing of text books with the aid of expert committee.

Textbook Committee : The curriculum in High Schools was prepared by the University to which they were affiliated for the purpose of examination, but the middle schools were free to adopt the curriculum suited to the local needs and circumstances. To evolve this curriculum and give an impetus to local talent in the field of authorship, a text book committee, composed of local educationists was formed which periodically invited books from authors and after getting them reviewed, selected the best books for adoption in schools.

Physical Education : Too much of emphasis on study is apt to impair physical efficiency and stunt the physical growth of students. For all-round development, it is necessary to guard

against the neglect of physical education. Physical Instructors and Directors were accordingly attached to schools and colleges.

Backward Communities and Areas : Certain sections of the population, such as the Harijans which were considered outside the pale of orthodoxy by the higher classes, hidebound in prejudices and superstitions could not profit by the spread of education to the desired extent as the latter insisted on segregation of their children in class rooms and imposed other restrictions on them. The Maharaja levelled all such stupid distinctions and sanctioned scholarships and where geographical conditions operated against the provision of facilities for higher education on liberal scale, specially attractive scholarships were awarded for further prosecution of studies at provincial head quarters.

Scholarships : Lest financial weakness should act as a drag on the pursuit of knowledge and prevent boys of special promise for enjoying full opportunity for self-expression, scholarships were provided to cover every conceivable contingency. Besides merit, poverty, orphanage and special scholarships were awarded.

*Foreign Education*⁶ : A Scholarship Selection Board was set up as part of the Prime Minister's Secretariat at the very outset of the Maharaja's reign to select candidates for higher studies in India and abroad. Stipends and loans were granted to such students, the latter payable in easy instalments on completion of the course of studies and entering a career. This Board helped hundreds of students in finding fullest scope for their abilities and occupying with distinction, a position of the highest importance in the service of the State, which would have ever remained beyond their reach otherwise. So keen was the Maharaja on raising the standard of education of his people that he lent his enthusiastic support to every measure to achieve this end as, for instance, the grant of study leave to the Government servants intent on improving their qualifications.

*Cheap Education*⁷ : To the great relief of the parents, education was free upto Matriculation and only a nominal fee was charged in the colleges. Moreover, even this fee was remitted in the case of poor but promising boys fighting their way upwards to higher education.

Female Education : The disabilities imposed on female education by age-long customs and conventions were perhaps nowhere more rigorous than in the State, where the very idea of sending a girl to a school was considered a horrible sacrilege. But the Maharaja, who had always been the sworn enemy of prejudice and superstition, would not tolerate postponement of female emancipation from the social and intellectual bondage which could be accomplished only through educational enlightenment. The violent contrast in the social attitude between the education of boys and of girls moved him deeply. A special department for female education under a Deputy Directress was set up accordingly. The Inspectresses were appointed and girls' schools began to multiply. Free conveyance was provided and callers appointed to collect girls from house to house and bring them to schools. This vigorous drive helped to overcome popular indifference and as time rolled, the movement gathered momentum. The State had now 335 girls' schools with a roll of 21,062 girl students. This includes several high and middle schools.

There has been a steady increase of girl students in the State colleges. Girl students were now joining the B.T. class and the colleges of post-graduate courses.

It may be mentioned that the scale of scholarships for girls is more liberal than for boys and private schools for girls are allowed grant-in-aid at double the rates. The Maharani, by evoking a keen interest in the welfare of her own sex gave a further fillip to girls' education. She usually made it a point to preside over the annual prize distribution functions of Government girls' high schools and awarded prizes to girls with her own hands. She was also liberal with gifts to teachers and students and spoke words of cheer to them. These were the factors which counted in the life of young girls who felt elated by the presence of the Maharani in their midst and competed for her favour by achieving more brilliant results from year to year.

Christian Missionary's Role in the Spread of Education : It may be mentioned here that it can easily be surmised that Maharaja Hari Singh could not remain uninfluenced by the

progressive and modern educational activities of the church missionaries in Kashmir. The founder of mission schools in Srinagar was Rev. J.H. Knowles, but it was with the advent of Rev. Tyndale Biscoe, who joined the Mission School in Srinagar in 1891, that it was a dawn of new era in the annals of modern educational system in Kashmir. The opening of these schools was, at first, vehemently criticised and opposed by the Government and people. But the determination of Biscoe was strong and he did not relent. He wrote a motto on the gate of his Mission School at Fatehkadal in Srinagar which said : “They say what they say; let them say what they say”, and he continued to work with all his zeal. Maharaja, it seems, must have felt happy at the cataclysmic educational change in the State. Like boys’ schools, the Christian Missionary Society opened girls’ schools in Srinagar.

In 1927, the Women’s Welfare Trust, Srinagar, came into existence with brilliant intellectuals as its trustees. They established six primary schools and three middle schools in Srinagar. The number of students rose to 375. The trust also opened three schools for Muslim girls in Srinagar.

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Health and Sanitation

The indigenous system of medicine was followed since time immemorial in the Jammu & Kashmir State. History records that Sultan Zain-ul-Abidin, who was on the verge of death, was treated and cured by Pandit Shri Bath, the renowned Hakim of Kashmir, by his own indigenous treatment and as a reward, he won many concessions for the Kashmir Pandits. W.R. Lawrence observes “the Kashmiris turn every plant and tree to some use and attribute medicinal properties to everything.”

The unani system of medicine came into vogue and many unani physicians like Hakim Sham Lal Bath and Bal Kak Hakim and other muslim hakims emerged and did a yeoman’s service in treating the patients. Prof. A.N. Raina says, “The unani system of medicine retained its popularity and is even now popular, *Araqs*, distilled water collected from evaporation after boiling medicinal herbs, is prescribed even now for certain diseases. The research for elixir to prolong life and retard aging, known in Sanskrit as *Rasaya*, was learnt by the Arabs from Kashmir.”

In Jammu, *ayurvedic* system was practised and continues even now. There were great hakims like Pt. Paras Ram and Pt. Vishwanath who were marvellous hakims. Possibly, ayurvedic system came to Jammu from the plains of India. All these

medicines were efficacious and cheap. Before that, hakims of Jammu knew the preparation of indigenous “bhasams” powders prepared by grounding certain minerals like Gold (Swarn Bhasam), Silver (Chandi Bhasam) and Moti Bhasam (Pearl Bhasam) and could also prepare some *araqs* for curing malaria and skin diseases. Pandit Bal Kishen Hakim was a great expert in it.

*Christian Missionaries*¹ : The credit of introducing Western scientific treatment by allopathic synthetic drugs and surgery goes to the Christian missionaries. The earlier doctors were Dr. Elmslie. Then came Dr. Theodore Maxwell. But now, the condition in Kashmir has changed. Dr. Ernest New writes in “Beyond the Pir Panjal (p.77) : “The opposition of the State authorities (to carry on their medical work) had been won and an immense amount of relief had been afforded to the sufferers...As an indirect result of the Medical Mission, the first Kashmir State dispensary had been started and this was the forerunner of the present extensive medical department.”

These missionaries rendered service at the time of epidemic like cholera and plague. Maharaja Ranbir Singh did not grant an inch of land to a missionary doctor, but in 1874, he granted a site for the Mission Hospital beneath the Shankaracharya Hill. The Government later constructed a building there at its own expense. The Maharaja himself visited the hospital, known as Drugjen Hospital. He was pleased to visit the hospital many times. Another hospital for women was established at Rainawari in Srinagar by the Church of England under the Zenana Missionary Society. The doctors, Miss Butler, Miss Irene Petric, Miss Robinson and Dr. Knowles did noble service to the women of Srinagar.

The medical work of the missionaries was admired by the Government and to provide free medical aid to the maximum of people, the Medical Department was reorganised on a large scale and for this, several doctors were deputed for higher training in medicine and surgery to British Universities. Some of them were Dr. Ali Jahn, Dr. Fazal-ul-Rehman, Dr. Balwant Singh, Dr. Barkat Ram. Some more brilliant students went for medical training on their own expenses, for example, Dr. Nasir Ahmed, Dr. R.N. Bath and other persons. The number of civil hospitals and dispensaries,

wholly maintained by the Government, was 98 dispensaries and four well equipped hospitals which received aid from the Government. In the State, there were one hundred hospitals and dispensaries in which highly qualified doctors were appointed. The Government appointed subsidised practitioners in rural areas.

During Hari Singh's reign², two new hospitals were constructed—the hospital at Jammu, named Maharaja Gulab Singh hospital, at the cost of over rupees Rs. 8 lakhs which was opened by the Maharaja in April 1943, and Maharaja Hari Singh Hospital at Srinagar costing rupees 35 lakhs, as opened by H.E. Lord Wavell on 11th October, 1945. It was designed to provide 320 beds. At Mirpur in Jammu province, another well-equipped hospital was established. Maharaja's Government was the first in India to establish a special organisation for T.B. Hospital. This department now maintains three hospitals in Kashmir and two in Jammu. A well-built and properly staffed sanatorium has been set up at Tanhmarg in Kashmir. It may be mentioned here that Shri Ramanand Sagar, film director, Krishna Kaul, the renowned artist and Padma Sachdev, the great Dogri poetess, have been treated and cured in Kashmir T.B. Hospital.

In order to fight the epidemic diseases, a special staff team was appointed. In the Jammu province, the outbreak of plague was a perennial problem. An anti-plague drive was undertaken in Jammu and since then for many years it has been free from this fatal disease. The Kashmir province became the victim of cholera off and on. The work done by the special epidemic staff has been huge which can be judged from the fact that in the cholera epidemic of 1935, about 13,00,000 inoculations were performed.³ When there was another outbreak of cholera in August 1941, it was soon brought under control. Special measures were taken to eradicate malaria from the Jammu province. Colossal measures have been taken to combat the venereal diseases in certain areas like Doda, Bhandarwah and Kishtwar in Jammu province. Special dispensaries have been opened for the treatment of these diseases. A laboratory for detecting these diseases was also established in Jammu and the educational propaganda and hygienic knowledge about the diseases was carried on among the people.

Maharaja Hari Singh personally took interest in streamlining the Medical Department with the aim of extending the medical facilities to the people. The staff was increased and medical officers were appointed in each district to supervise the work of the hospital in the concerned district.

Sanitation

Sanitation was a great concern of the Maharaja. In 1881, the Municipal Committees were formed in Jammu and Srinagar cities. The Jammu Municipality composed of 4 Government and 12 unofficial members. Its first President was Pt. Radha Kishen Dhar, the Governor of Jammu. The Srinagar Municipality consisted of 5 Government and 11 non-official members. Its first President was Dr. A. Mitra.

All the members were nominated by the Government. In 1913, the Srinagar Municipality got the right to elect eight while Jammu Municipality elected six members. The members of the Srinagar Municipality were enlarged from 16 to 18 members. In both the municipalities, one seat was reserved for traders.

In 1940, the Srinagar Committee of Srinagar was composed of 18 members, two-thirds of whom were elected and one-third of whom were nominated. Dr. Hassan writes : "By 1941, the Srinagar Municipality's administrative staff consisted of a paid President, a Secretary, a Revenue Officers and Municipal Health Officer and a Municipal Engineer. Under these officers was a large staff of executive employees." The city water works and the fire brigade were out of the jurisdiction of these municipalities.

The job of the municipalities was the construction of roads, the improvement of drainage system etc. Gallons of phenyl were distributed and poured down the drains. The municipalities metalled some roads and some gardens like Pratap Park in Srinagar and Zenana Park in Jammu were established. All unripe and over-ripe fruit sold by the fruit-sellers were being destroyed. The streets were provided with electric lights. At the behest of the Government, the municipality constructed a sewer from Sare-i-Bala to Chattabal in Srinagar (The Tribune, Oct. 10, 1931).

The Municipal bunds were enlarged during 1921 by the

inclusion of Zanimar tract, Batamalloo, Baghi Nand Singh, Sonawar, Shivpora and Rathpora, etc. During Maharaja Hari Singh's time, the urbanisation on a massive scale had taken place and steadily, many towns also came into its orbit. Town Area Committees were formed.

To guard against overcrowding in the cities of Jammu and Srinagar, several areas were notified under Town Planning Act. The Town Planning Department advised the Town Area Committees with regard to Town Planning problems and special surveys for development of holiday resorts were undertaken particularly in areas of Sonamarg in Kashmir and Sanasar in the Jammu province.

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Press and Platform

Bhubani Bhattacharya writes, “No one discussed the matter with more frankness and insight than Munro (the Governor of Madras) in 1822.” He quotes him thus : “A free press and the dominion of strangers are things which are quite incompatible and which cannot exist together.”¹ Munro had written “...for which is the first duty of free press? It is to deliver the country from a foreign yoke, and the sacrifice to this one great object measure and consideration” (Glimpses of India, p. 248).

In Jammu and Kashmir, there was always apprehension of the communists’ onslaught on the British Empire in India through the State. So, the British Government kept a vigilant eye on the events in the border State, and saw to it that the press did not create any ill-will against them. In fact, in British India, the emergence of a free press was not allowed not only in Jammu and Kashmir but also in other princely States of India.

Thus, the laws about the press were very strict. In accordance with the Press and Publication Regulation Act of 1914, it was only the Maharaja who could grant permission and it was not granted to any one till 1924. The British Government did not like to have any awakening in the strategically located State of Jammu and Kashmir.

Birth of Press

The first paper to hit the news stands was *Ranbir* on June 24, 1924. But on the complaint of the Maharaja Hari Singh's Chief Secretary G.E.C. Wakefield, the paper was banned on May 9, 1930. It is interesting to read the order of the Maharaja : "My attention has been drawn to the account in the special issue of the *Ranbir* dated May 7, 1930, of disgraceful demonstration which lately took place in the city of Jammu in connection with the arrest of Mr. Gandhi in British India.¹

"I have all along held the views that it is not for my Government or my people to interfere in the affairs of British India and it has been a cordial article of faith to observe scrupulously my treaty obligations with the British Government according to the practice of a civilised Government. One of these obligations is not to countenance or permit any political demonstration within my territory against the British Government."

"I hereby direct that the permission accorded to the publication of *Ranbir* be immediately cancelled and its further publication stopped."

"In issuing this order, I desire to make it quite clear that it is not my intention to curb in any way the legitimate expression of opinion or fair and just criticism of the policy and acts of myself and my Government. The policy regarding these matters will continue unchanged and I shall be quite willing to entertain applications whether in Jammu or Srinagar or both from other journalists wishing to start another newspaper or newspapers within the State territory so long as their bonafides are not in question."

Ranbir reappeared on November 13, 1931. From this order, two points are clear that—the Maharaja was willing to give legitimate freedom to the press but on the other hand, the British Government wanted to prevent a newspaper from expressing opinions freely. But the Maharaja could know the pulse of the people only through the papers. He read the foreign and Indian papers and magazines with interest. The papers from Punjab came freely to Jammu and Kashmir and it was not long before he allowed the papers to be published in the State as well.

Papers from Punjab : In the absence of local newspapers in the State, those published in Punjab found their way to the State.

The Civil and Military Gazette and *The Tribune* of Lahore and a number of Urdu weekly magazines circulated in the State. Sometimes, *The Statesman* and *The Pioneer* also came for the British visitors in Kashmir.

The papers published from Lahore which entered the State, contained much information regarding Kashmir. These were :

1. The *Khair-khawa-i-Kashmir*. A monthly magazine edited by Pt. Manka Maghar (1898-1901) that was mainly devoted to the upliftment of Kashmiri Pandits. It was called *Kashmir Prakash*.

2. The *Kashmir Gazette*, Lahore, an Urdu Monthly edited by Munshi Moh'd Din Fauq during 1901-1904 was published for the social and political awakening of Kashmiri Muslims.

3. The *Kashmiri Makhzen*, Lahore, an Urdu monthly during 1905 dealt with the social upliftment of Kashmiris.

4. *The Kashmiri Magazine*, Lahore, founded by Fauq

5. *Akhbar-i-Kashmir*

6. *The Safir*

7. *The Subhi-i-Kashmir*

8. *The Bahar-i-Kashmir*

9. *The Hamdard-i-Hind*

10. *The Kashmir*

11. *The Mazlum-Kashmir*

12. *Kuktab-i-Kashmir*

13. *The Kashmiri Muslim*

Permanent papers among these which were generally read in the State were *Tribune*, *Pratap* and *Milap*.

The Dawn of Press in the State : Maharaja Hari Singh was a progressive and enlightened ruler and he took cognisance of the awakening among the people and the spread of education throughout the State. As a consequence, he issued an order known as Press and Publication Act on April 25, 1932 to facilitate the publications of newspapers in the State. This encouraged the establishment of many papers in Srinagar and Jammu. Provision for the security of printing press and newspapers was also modified.

The first paper to appear after the Press Act of 1932 was *Paswaan* started by Munshi Miraj-ud-din. Similarly, Pt. Prem Nath Bazaaz brought out Urdu Weekly *Vitasta* in Srinagar in 1932. This was followed by the *Martand*, the *Sadaqat*, the *Haqiqat*, The *Kashmir Jadid*, the *Albarq*, the *Bekari*, the *Pehgam*, the *Khalid*, the *Hidayat*, the *Kesari* the *Muslim*, the *Desh*, the *Weekly Hamdard*, the *Daily Hamdard*, The *Daily Khidmat*, the *Paigham*, the *Kashmir Guardian*, The *Qaumi Dard*, *The Islah*, the *Vakil*, the *Islam*, The *Uryat*, the *Nur*, the *Rahbar*, the *Tamhid*, the *Zulfiqar*, the *Jehangir*, the *Roshni*, the *Gaash*, The *Shamsheer* and the *Khalsa Gazette*.

Prof. Mohammad Ishaq Khan writes in his book, thus, "With the passage of time, newspapers in Srinagar grew with the real power in public life. The strength of the press in Srinagar arose from the organisation of blunt opinion against corruption and misrule...the *Weekly Hamdard* was started by Bazaaz in collaboration with Sheikh Moh'd Abdulla on August 1, 1935 with the purpose of laying the foundation of progressive nationalism in the state." Prof. Khan further says, "It was a standard-bearer of democracy and unity of Kashmir without any consideration of caste or creed they professed...There can be no doubt that it was mainly through the sober, thoughtful and inspiring writings of this weekly that the Muslim Conference was converted into the National Conference in 1939. *The Hamdard* became a daily when Bazaaz broke association with Sheikh Abdullah"²

The *Martand* was the top paper. Its circulation was much higher in standard than that of any local paper. It was the mouthpiece of Sanatan Dharm Yuvak Sabha, which represented the points of view of the minority. It discussed the social, economic and political problems facing Kashmiri Pandits. But it also discussed the themes of Hindu-Muslim unity, expansion of industries and labour welfare.

The important English weeklies were the *Kashmir Times*, the *Kashmir Chronicle* and the *Qaumi Dard*. Pt. Gwash Lal Kaul was a good writer and one of the founders of *Kashmir Times*. He edited the paper in 1934, but later, he brought out *Kashmir Chronicle*.

The *Kashmir Times*, inspite of being moderate in his opinions, criticised the Government. The paper in its issue dated March 20, 1931 wrote, "large section of the people of Kashmir is already demanding a responsible form of Government in the State. The minorities in the State have never opposed this demand but what they want is safeguard. The cry for a responsible Government cannot be deferred too long. Thwarting the way of the progress of the country and the nation was never conceived by any school of patriotism. This is high time, therefore, that the various communities in Jammu and Kashmir State sank their difference and evolved a common formula so that Kashmir may be able to give a lead to the other Indian States."³ In fact, Maharaja Hari Singh read *The Kashmir Times* in order to know the trend of public opinion.

Thus, Maharaja Hari Singh was not, as alleged later, completely cut off from the people. He could not stomach the criticism against the Government as is natural; he must have acted on the suggestions of these papers as reflected in the administrative reconstruction of the State.

Another English paper *Qaumi Dard*, started by Jia Lal Kilam in 1935, was first published in Urdu and later in English. It fought against communalism. In the July 20, 1937 edition, the paper wrote that communalism should be banished in the body politic and the goodwill of the minorities should be secured. It fought against the social evils. It also contained articles against the capitalists and bureaucrats.

The well circulated papers were the *Hurriyat* and *Islam*, which were started by Mohammad Yousuf Shal. These papers had the main theme of injustice to the Muslims. The *Islah* and *Albarq* charged the Government of communalism and voiced forcefully the demands of the Muslims.

Khidmat, initially started by Kh. Sadar-ud-Din Mujahid and edited by Maulana Sayyid, became the official organ of the National Conference. It strongly and fearlessly advocated that the only solution to the problems of the people was responsible Government. Pt. Kashyap Bandhu's *Kesari* followed by *Desh* were in favour of a responsible Government and exhorted the people

to shun party politics and fight side by side for attaining this form of Government.

Maharaja Hari Singh was a progressive, broadminded and enlightened ruler. "It is noteworthy", writes O.P. Sharma, the former Deputy Director, Information of the State, "that when Maharaja Hari Singh ascended the throne in 1925, there was only one Urdu Weekly, and in 1949, when he left the State after appointing his son Dr. Karan Singh as the Regent and installing a popular Government, there were 67 newspapers."⁴ He further says, "There were not many restrictions in the freedom of press as the Maharaja believed that healthy criticism of the Government served as feedback to his administration and helped him in setting in motion the grievance redressal machinery."

Broadcasting : The broadcasting service also started during the reign of Hari Singh.⁵ On December 1, 1947, the first radio station was set up in Jammu. It was inaugurated by Maharani Tara Devi, and at 6.30 p.m., when her sweet voice was heard on air, it thrilled the public. Radio station was set up at Srinagar in July 1948. The broadcasting formed the function of the Jammu and Kashmir Government and then in 1954, it was taken over by the Government of India.

Platform : The speeches were made by the Hindu and Muslim leaders after getting permission from the Government. But the Muslim leaders in Jammu and Srinagar delivered the lectures in Idgah or mosques after the Friday prayers. Sheikh Moh'd Abdulla made his platform in the large ground of Hazratbal mosque as his venue for delivering speeches. Moulvi Yusuf Shah delivered speeches at the Srinagar Idgah. Later on, Mujahid Manzil was used by Sheikh Abdullah.

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*Towards a Responsible
Government*

The Islamic polity was democratic but had discarded its democratic trapping with the fifth caliph and had changed into unadulterated monarchy long before it came into India. The British aped the Mohammedan predecessors, though at home they were full-blooded democrats, and it was only when the Indian National Congress began to agitate for turning the Government to the wishes of the Indian people that the British autocracy came to be reluctantly tintured with small and gradual doses of democracy.

Maharaja Hari Singh was a democrat by temperament and his democratic convictions were reinforced by his travels in foreign countries, training and education. In England, he found democracy governing Governmental activities in all phases. He realised that people's prosperity could only be built on democratic foundation and began to shape the character of his Government accordingly and to guide the steps of his people to the realm of Lok Raj.

It was necessary to build from the bottom, for any abrupt change could not only prove unhealthy but disastrous. He

encouraged the people to meet him in regular weekly audiences and ventilate their grievances. This was done earlier also since the time of Maharaja Gulab Singh who heard the peoples' problems and granted relief immediately. From contact, the next step was consultation, and twice a year, the leading representatives of the masses in the provinces were summoned at the Government headquarters to state their problems and needs of their areas which were attended to in order of urgency by the Government. The representatives were paid travelling allowances and sumptuary allowance. They fairly represented the variety of interests in the State. This was a powerful means of awakening political consciousness among the masses which had lain in torpor for centuries and formed a Praja Sabha in embryo.

The tradition from an informal assemblage of people's representatives to a formal assembly was inevitable and was the next item in the political programme of the Maharaja. But meanwhile, communal agitation supervened and suffocated the peaceful process. One of the Muslim demands related to the setting up of a legislative assembly in the State.

The constitutional system that he liked was that of England. Prof. Manzoor Fazili writes, "As a king he could not think of American constitution and the type of Presidential rule that it had. It does not reflect that he had the intention of becoming a rubber seal like the King of England at that time. He had to blend the two extremes of absolute powers and goodwill of his subjects through the constitutionalism that he had witnessed in England. It is with this compromise that the Jammu and Kashmir Constitution Act (No. xiv of 1936) was promulgated with effect from September 7, 1939."¹

To associate his people with the administration of the State, the Maharaja appointed a Reforms Conference with Mr. Glancy as President. The result of the recommendations made by the Conference and the Franchise Commission set earlier in 1932 under the Chairmanship of Sir Barjor Dalal were accepted by the Maharaja in 1934. In 1939, an Englishman named Ire Elliot was appointed as Franchise Officer. The Praja Sabha was inaugurated by the Maharaja in October 1934. These constitutional reforms

envisaged overhauling the system of the Government on proper lines. It demarcated the powers of legislature and executive branches of his Government in Part I and II. The Constitution, no doubt, vested all the legislative, executive and judicial powers in the Maharaja. Part II of the Constitution dealt with the Executive of the State. It vested the civil administration in the Council of Ministers. The Council consisted of the Prime Minister and such other Ministers which the Maharaja appointed. The Prime Minister and other Ministers held office during the pleasure of the Maharaja.

In Part III, the Constitution dealt with the legislature. According to it, the legislature would consist of the Maharaja and a chamber called as Praja Sabha. The Praja Sabha consisted of the President and 75 members. Forty members were elected and the rest were nominated by the Maharaja. The Assembly had to meet every year at least once. The Sabha could communicate to His Highness through the President. Praja Sabha could not make laws about His Highness or the royal family nor could it influence the treaties or agreements between the Jammu and Kashmir State and the Government of India or any foreign country, the frontier areas, Jagirs of Poonch and Chenani. It could not interfere in rights granted to Jagirdars, State forces, Hazur department, Dharmarth Trust, etc. The Sabha could discuss the annual financial Statement and classification of expenditure. It laid down a procedure with regard to expenditure. In Part IV, the Constitution dealt with the constitution, tenure of judges, and qualification of Judges. The High Court had jurisdiction over the control of subordinate courts.

Prof. Fazili says, "The constitutional scheme under the Jammu & Kashmir Constitutional Act of 1956 (xx xiv of 1956), amended upto July 1946, visualised the type of constitution of the British type of constitutional monarchy."² The Constitution Act of Samvat 1991 has been based on the same principle in which the President of the Council was the communication link between the Praja Sabha and His Highness, who was the Chief Executive. Bamzai, the historian says, "The franchise was limited only to three per cent of the population. Only head priests, doctors, lawyers and

those who had passed middle school examination or its equivalent could vote...The Praja Sabha, of course, could ask questions, move resolutions, introduce Bills and discuss the State Budget.”

The essence of the constitutional reforms as envisaged by His Highness is :

1. That the Government should not be arbitrary, and
2. That the popular voice should have means at its disposal of influencing the decisions of the Government of the day.

3. New line was thus assured by the proclamation of the Jammu and Kashmir Constitution Act which embodied these reforms promulgated by His Highness in the first week of September, 1939.

Later, the Praja Sabha was instructed to nominate a panel of six (three Muslims) of its members, three from Jammu and three from Kashmir (including the Frontier District), out of which His Highness appointed two ministers (one Muslim and one Hindu). This royal command was welcomed by the National Conference and the Muslim Conference.

M.A. Beg, on behalf of the National Conference, declared it as “really step forwards”. He said, “His Highness’s command has come at a time when nobody would deny that any constitutional reforms easily would have been deferred if he wished.” Chowdury Hamid Ullah also asserted : “Our beloved ruler, by taking this progressive step, of which the State may be proud of, has given two representatives of the House, thereby graciously bestowing a great honour to all the other members of the House.” The whole House was jubilant on that day, viz. October 7, 1944. With the appointment of Mirza Afzal Beg and Wazir Ganga Ram as the popular ministers with effect from October 21, 1944; the ball was set rolling for further participation of the people in the administration of the State. According to the State Hand Book dated 1945. The Constitution Act³ subsequently promulgated embodies the provisions of the proclamation of the eleventh February, 1939. The noteworthy features are as follows :

1. Subject to his Highness’s inherent legislative, executive and judicial powers in relation to the State and the Government, the Council of Ministers, comprising of the Prime Minister and

such other Ministers of State as His Highness may appoint, is invested with the power of superintendence, direction and control of civil Administration and Government of the State.

2. Provision is made for the appointment of an Advocate General.

3. The legislature of the State is to consist of His Highness and the Praja Sabha, which comprises 75 members, excluding the President, who is appointed by His Highness. The members of the Council are ex-officio members of the Praja Sabha and of the remaining nominated members, not more than 8 (excluding members of the Council) are officials. The Praja Sabha has power to make laws for the whole of the State or any part thereof and for all the subject of His Highness, whoever they may be.

Provision is made for laying before the Praja Sabha in respect of every financial year, a statement of the estimated receipts and expenditure of the State for the year and so much of the budget estimates as relates to expenditure to the Praja Sabha in the form of demands for grants. The Praja Sabha has the power to assent to or to refuse assent to any demand or to assent to it subject to a reduction of the amount. The Council, however, has the power to restore the grant refused or reduced by the Praja Sabha, provided it considers that the expenditure is necessary for the functioning of any department or for the discharge of the Council's responsibility for administration. Besides, His Highness may, in cases of emergency, authorise such expenditure as may be necessary in his opinion for the safety or tranquility of the State, or any part threatened or for the functioning of any department :

The Praja Sabha has constituted Standing Committees for Finance, Industries, Public Health, Agriculture, Co-operation and Education.

The following message of the Maharaja Hari Singh was read out to the Praja Sabha by the President on October 2, 1944 :

“With a view to give further effect to my policy of associating my subjects with the administration of the State, I have, after careful consideration, decided to call upon the Praja Sabha to nominate a panel of six (three Muslims) of its members, three from Jammu and three from Kashmir (including the Frontier

District). The Assembly will determine its own procedure for nominating the panel, with official members taking no part in the proceedings. Out of the panel so nominated, I shall appoint two (one of whom will be Muslim) as my Ministers. These Ministers shall hold charge of Portfolios to be determined by me. They will draw the usual salary of Ministers unless the Praja Sabha desires to vary it, in which case the Sabha may submit its recommendations to me through the usual channels. The Ministers so appointed by me will hold office during my pleasure or for two years, after which, if they still continue to be members of the Sabha, they will be eligible for reappointment.

“I wish to make it clear that the step I have decided to take as indicated above is of an experimental character and it shall be open to me in case I find it has not fulfilled the purpose intended, to direct any modification that I may, in the light of the circumstances then existing, deem fit.”⁴

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Maharaja Pratap Singh
who ascended the throne after him



Maharaja Gulab Singh
Founder of the Jammu & Kashmir State



Raja Amar Singh
Father of Maharaja Hari Singh



Maharaja Hari Singh as a youngman



Maharaja Hari Singh
as a boy in Dogri dress



Maharaja Hari Singh as a young
boy dressed in Durbar clothes



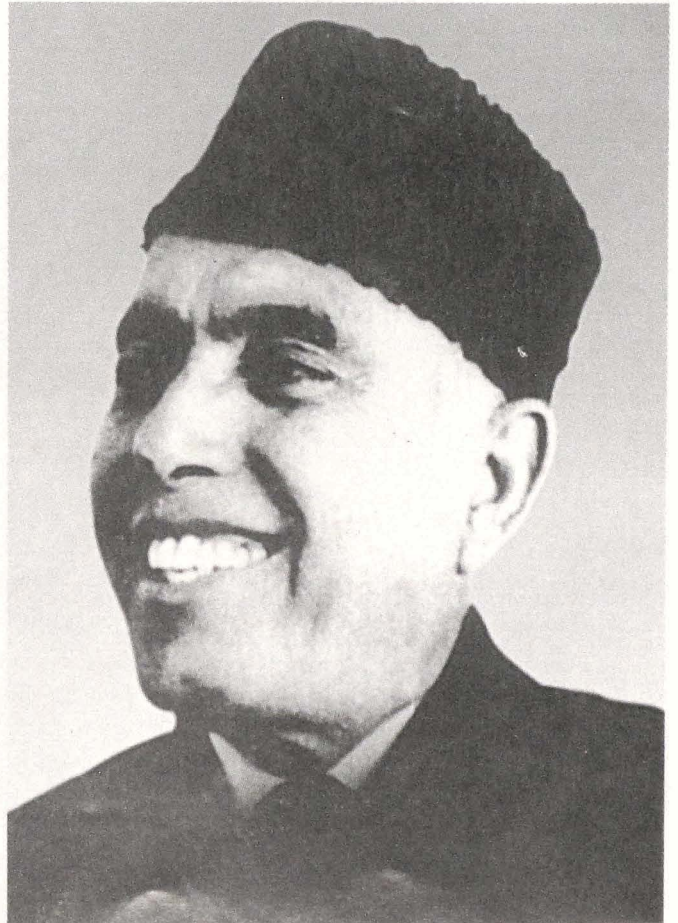
Maharaja Hari Singh



Maharani Tara Devi, Wife of Maharaja Hari Singh



Yuvraj Karan Singh (as a boy),
Son of Maharaja Hari Singh



Sheikh Abdullah, Shere-n-Kashmir



Hari Niwas Palace, the new palace where Maharaja Hari Singh lived



Dr. Karan Singh,
Son of Maharaja Hari Singh



Yeshoraj Laxami,
Wife of Dr. Karan Singh



The Autumn

*“...quite coves His soul has in its Autumn, when his
wing He furlerh close; contented so to look On mists
in idleness-to let fair things Pass by unheeded as a
threshold brook.”*

—Keats

The Gathering Clouds

The British realised Kashmir's strategic location—close to the U.S.S.R., bordering on Afghanistan, China, Turkistan (Sinkiang) Tibet, India and Pakistan. The strategically well placed land was assigned an important place in the global schemes of Britain.

Unfortunately, Maharaja Hari Singh had great dislike for the British, as his involvement in the scandalous blackmail case in London in 1912 with the tacit help of Mr. Arthur, his A.D.C. deputed by the Political Department of the Government of India, haunted him. Therefore, he withdrew many facilities that the Resident enjoyed at Srinagar. Moreover, his attitude towards frontier policy was fraught with danger for the British. Gilgit was a very significant strategic spot for the British and to question their right to hold it produced a hostile reaction from their side. Maharaja Hari Singh's demand to abolish the Agency and hand over its control to him was puerile, and for this, he had to pay by the nose. He got respite only when he gave up the demand for the restoration of Gilgit and when in 1935 he handed over the Gilgit Wazarat on a sixty years' lease to the British.

Another cause of the enmity of the British for him was the

expression of pro-nationalist sentiments at the Round Table Conference held in London in early 1931. He said : “As Indians, and loyal to the land whence we derive our birth and infant nurture, we stand as solidly as the rest of our countrymen for our land’s enjoyment of position of honour and equality in the British Commonwealth of Nations.”¹

Such observations convinced the British that Maharaja Hari Singh was proud and would not toe their line. But, with all the bias against the British, the Maharaja came under the influence of a shrewd and scheming Englishman, G.E.C. Wakefield, who became his trusted Minister in early 1929. The Maharaja, ignorant of the forces that were rising under his feet, indulged in pleasures and spent most of his time outside the State, leaving the field clear for Wakefield to set into motion the favourable game of playing Muslims against the Hindus. The British poisoned his life all through by their conspiracies.

All the same, it is a fact that because of the misrule of centuries by the ruthless and cruel kings and rulers, the conditions in Kashmir were very deplorable. Though there was communal amity among the Hindus and Muslims, they were helpless as ignorance, hunger and want were eating into their vitals. Epidemics and famines were recurrent occurrence and took a heavy toll of life. This situation reached its apex towards the beginning of the 19th century.

Now, the main reason for this was that the state administration was run by people who had no sympathy for the people of the State. They had created mess, disorder and made a muck of the administration. In the preceding chapters, it has been shown how Maharaja Hari Singh rolled up his sleeves and cleared the Augean Stables of various departments, streamlined and brought about cataclysmic reformation in every aspect of the Government. He wanted to make Kashmir a real paradise, but as explained above, the British, by their “Divide and Rule” policy, hindered all the endeavours for which, to some extent, he was himself responsible. He lacked the subtle art of diplomacy and mechanics of creating friendly relations with his enemies. His pride and obsession with self-dignity barred his way.

During the reign of Maharaja Pratap Singh, the court and official language was changed from Persian to Urdu and English. As there were a very few people who knew either of these languages, the result was that there was unemployment besides corruption. With the passage of time, quite a number of youngmen got education in schools teaching English, and naturally, there grew bitterness between the inhabitants of the State and the Punjabi officials who had occupied all the important jobs in the administration of the State.

There were occasional rumblings in the political horizon. Organised demonstrations took place between 1922-23, protesting for solving the food problem. So, when Hari Singh ascended the throne, the people had the background of political unrest and agitation. There was regular inflow of the newspapers and magazines from the plains which influenced their thinking.

Many Muslim young men had received education from the Indian Universities, particularly Aligarh, where they had come into contact with the Muslim leaders and propagators of Muslim communalism. These young men organised themselves into a group and held meetings at the Muslim Reading Room in Srinagar. Frustrated at not getting proper jobs, they realised that without the backing of the general public, they had no future. They organised huge meetings, and carried propaganda against the Hindu Government.

Emergence of Sheikh Moh'd Abdulla

The most conspicuous and charismatic among the above young men was Sheikh Moh'd Abdulla.² He was like a colossus on the political stage of Kashmir. It requires a full chapter to describe his character. In the meanwhile, it may be said that he was born in 1905 and brought up by his widowed mother and elder brothers who were engaged in shawl trade. After passing his M.Sc. from the Aligarh Muslim University in 1930, he got a teacher's job in the Government High School, Srinagar. The Maharaja's Government had set up a Civil Service Recruitment Board for the selection of candidates to higher posts on the basis of merit. The Hindus, who had by then advanced in education and secured

technical qualifications, were preferred. Sheikh Abdulla protested against this policy and resigned his job.

He also organised mammoth meetings in various mosques and delivered fiery speeches. Communal tension was at its height.

The Political Fury³, July 13, 1931

July 13, 1931, called by the Muslims 'Martyrs' Day', is the turning point in the political history of Kashmir. On June 21, 1931, a fiery and seditious speech was delivered by one Abdul Qadir, who had come to Kashmir in the service of a European as a cook, in the precincts of Khanqah of Shah Hamadan. A cook and then an orator! How he came there? It appears that he had fallen from the sky for the purpose. The speech was considered by the Government as seditious. He was arrested and his trial held in the court of a Session Judge. Ordinarily, the cook's 'cooking' should have been thrown out and altogether ignored. Now, his trial greatly excited the Muslim public and large crowds gathered in and around the court on the day of hearing. Consequently, the trial was held in the Srinagar Central Jail. They raised slogans and made a rush at the gate of the jail. They got furious and pelted stones at the police. Meanwhile the prisoners in the jail also became restive. Telephone wires were cut. The District Magistrate, thereupon, ordered the police to open fire. Twenty-one persons died and many more were injured.

Mr. Wakefield was sought but he could not be contacted by the Government. He was at that time with the Resident. While he was chatting, the whole city was rioting and fighting. This was done intentionally. The crowd carried the dead bodies on *charpoys* and raised banners of blood and marched through the main bazaars of the city. Unfortunately, their wrath was turned against the Hindu whom they associated with the Maharaja's Government. Shops of the Hindus were looted and there was communal outburst in Vicharnag, a suburb of Srinagar where three Pandits were killed. But, soon after, the traditional amity and goodwill between the Hindus and Muslims, which had been shaken by this outburst, asserted immediately.

The Maharaja appointed an official Committee presided over by the Chief Justice of the State High Court to conduct into the 13th July firings. It was boycotted by the Muslims who had no trust in the impartiality of the chief Justice.

The British Intervention⁴

The British supported the demand for instituting an impartial Commission of Enquiry. The Resident personally communicated the message for the Maharaja in which he was advised to get an independent assistance for the Commission of Enquiry or a Muslim High Court Judge to add to the existing Committee. But the Maharaja replied that this would diminish the prestige of the State High Court if an outside Muslim Judge would be appointed to the Commission of Enquiry. He assured the viceroy that the situation would come to normal soon. The Resident, again on August 1, 1931, conveyed to the Maharaja the demand of the Muslims from Punjab to meet the Maharaja. This was refused by the Maharaja.

In the meantime, the Maharaja dismissed the British Minister, Wakefield, who was the kingpin in the whole affair. While the turmoil was on, an experienced administrator, Hari Krishen Koul, was appointed in place of Wakefield. He invited the representatives of the Muslims and truce was concluded on 26th August and the agitation was suspended and they were asked to submit their grievances to the Government.

The prisoners were released and cases against them withdrawn. This truce agreement was rejected by the members of the All-India Kashmiri Committee, now called as the Kashmiri Muslim Conference of Lahore. They started their propaganda against the truce and Sheikh Moh'd Abdulla launched another agitation in violation of the truce agreement and was promptly arrested along with some of his followers.

The people got furious and numerous processions were taken out in the streets of Srinagar. The Maharaja's Government acted immediately and the rule of ordinances was inaugurated. The Notification 19-L, based on the Burma Ordinance of the British

Government, was promulgated. There were arrests and public beating and firing in the important towns.

The Commanding Note of the British⁵

The Resident delivered a peremptory note to the Maharaja demanding its acceptance within 24 hours. The note mentioned that there was the fear of the breach of peace in Punjab and Jathas (bands of volunteers) may be sent by the Muslims in the State. Therefore, the Government of India desired that the following concessions should be announced immediately.

1. Immediate steps should be taken to remedy the grievances of Muslims such as cow killing ordinance, the prohibition of Khutaba and stoppage of Azaan, etc.

2. A British Officer deputed by the Government of India should hold enquiry into Muslim grievances and demands. The Government of India advised His Highness to make a request for the loan of such an officer immediately.

3. A European, Indian Civil Service Officer be appointed as the Prime Minister.

4. Sir Daya Krishen Koul (the brother of Raja Hari Krishen Koul) should be asked to leave the State as soon as possible.

The Maharaja, under the pressure of the British, had to eat a humble pie. Naturally, on October 5, 1931, which happened to be his birthday, he released all the political prisoners and announced that an impartial commission would be instituted to examine the grievances of the people to make appropriate recommendations.

The trouble erupted in Jammu where the unrest was simmering for some time. The Ahrar Party of the Punjab organised several demonstrations to show their sympathies with the Muslims of the State. They started sending Jathas into the State from Punjab. Simultaneously, a communal riot broke out in Mirpur district where the Hindus were plundered. The Kashmir Government could not control the situation and they requested the Government of India to send one company of the British troops to Mirpur and two to Jammu district to restore law and order.

Glancey Commission⁶

The British Government got an opportunity to immediately send the troops on 3rd November and 7th November; the Ahrar stopped the sending of Jathas into the state.

In accordance with the Government of India, a request was made for the loan of a British Officer to preside over a commission to examine the grievances of the people. The Maharaja, on 12th November, announced the appointment of a Commission under the chairmanship of B.J. Glancey of the Foreign and Political Department of the Indian Government. The members of the Commission were, (i) G.A. Ashai (Kashmiri Muslim), (ii) Ghulam Abbas (Jammu Muslim), (iii) Lok Nath Sharma (Jammu Hindu), and (iv) Prem Nath Bazaaz (Kashmiri Hindu). Soon after, the Hindu of Jammu, Lok Nath Sharma, resigned, but the Commission went ahead with its work. The recommendations of the Glancey Commission were as follows :

1. The qualifications for appointment to a Government post should not be pitched too high and measures must be taken to prevent the due interests of any community from being neglected.

In the matter of the distribution of Government services, the Commission's main recommendation was that "effective measures should be taken to provide a system (of appointment and a machinery for supervising that system) in such a way as to see that the due interests of any community from being neglected."

2. Distribution of religious buildings in the occupation of Government to that community.
3. Propriety to be granted to land of which the ownership was retained by the State.
4. Kacharari (Grazing tax) to be suspended in certain specific areas.
5. Payment of labour requisitioned for State purposes to be made at proper rates.
6. Promotion of industries to receive attention of the State authorities.

Further, under the Presidentship of B. J. Glancy, it was

recommended to set up a Legislative Assembly (Prajā Sabha) elected on a narrow and limited franchise, having only recommendatory powers.

Col. Colvin : While the Grievances Commission was conducting its enquiry Lt. Col. E.J.D. Colvin, an Englishman of Foreign and Political Department, was appointed as the Prime Minister.

Lease of Gilgit : The Maharaja gave Gilgit wazarat on lease to the British Government for 60 years as mentioned already. The lease document was signed on March 29, 1935 by the Maharaja and the Resident Col. L. Lang.

In the meantime, the recommendations of the Commission were promptly approved and accepted by the Maharaja. These were satisfactory to the Muslims while the Kashmiri Pandits were shocked. They were a highly educated community and represented the intellectual class and they felt frustrated as they got no opportunity of rising in Government service or any other field of useful activity such as industry or commerce. So, a non-violent agitation, known as the Bread Movement (Roti agitation) was started by the Pandits to protest against the recommendations of the Glancey Commission. The agitation was stopped when the state Government assured them that the grievances of the Kashmiri Pandits would be considered sympathetically.

After getting Gilgit transferred to the British, Col. Colvin relinquished the post of Prime Minister in early 1936 which seems to have been his main purpose. Afterwards, no other Britisher was appointed as Prime Minister. Sir N.Gopalswami Iyyengar took over as the Prime Minister under the orders of the Maharaja. Gopalswamy had served the British Government for a long time, but at heart he was a nationalist and he saw to it that the formation of a truly nationalist party gained strength.

The Muslim Conference

The Jammu and Kashmir Muslim Conference Party's President Sheikh Moh'd Abdulla appealed to the Hindus and Sikhs to participate in the function observed on 8th May, 1936 as the responsible Government Day throughout the State. A number of

meetings were held which were addressed by the Hindus, Sikhs and Muslim leaders, exhorting the people to form a common platform and party. The "Responsible Government Day" aroused enthusiasm among the people to form a truly nationalist party.

The mind of the people was experiencing a cataclysmic change which came to light when in 1937, a procession of labourers, led by Bakshi Ghulam Moh'd, was taken out in Srinagar. It raised slogans against the retrenchment and consequent unemployment. In the huge gathering, Bakshi Ghulam Moh'd and G.M. Sadiq declared that the movement was above communalism and all the communities would take part in it. Several Hindu and Sikh leaders spoke in the same terms. It is due to the leaders of the Muslim Conference that the embryo of United National Party was formed. In the sixth session of the Muslim Conference on 20th March, 1938, Sheikh Moh'd Abdulla, in his Presidential address, declared: "We must end communalism by ceasing to think in terms of Muslims and non-Muslims when discussing the political problems... and we must open our doors to all such Hindus and Sikhs who, like ourselves, believe in the freedom of their country from the shackles of an irresponsible rule."

On June 23, there was a meeting of the Working Committee of the Muslim Conference at Srinagar. After two days long discussion lasting 52 hours, a resolution was passed to the effect that all people, irrespective of caste, creed and religion, can join in a united national party. In August 1939, the National Demand was issued under the signatures of twelve leading members of various political parties. The National Demand declared that the goal of the people was "to bring about complete change in their social and political outlook and to achieve a responsible Government under the aegis of the Maharaja." It was signed by Sheikh Moh'd Abdulla, Bakshi Ghulam Moh'd, G. M. Sadiq, Jia Lal Kilam, Sham Lal Saraf and Sd. Budh Singh. Next year, the recommendation of the Working Committee was passed by the General Council and the National Conference was born.

The first session of the National Conference was held in October, 1939. It passed a resolution approving the National Demand. The resolution demanded the establishment of a

legislature consisting of members elected by adult franchise, based on a joint electorate with some seats reserved for minorities. The Legislature must have control over the State Budget except on military services, on the subjects classed as political and foreign and on the payment of debts and liabilities contracted and incurred by His Highness in Council.

The Maharaja's Government conceded some more reforms in 1939. Several more seats were thrown open to election.

The Quit India Movement, launched by the Indian National Congress in 1942, had its influence on Kashmir's politics and on 16th August, 1942, the National Conference, in its resolution, said that "the demand of the Congress was based on just reasons...The National Conference did not actively take part in the Movement as advised by the National Congress."

NAYA KASHMIR⁸ "New Kashmir Plan"

The National Conference felt restless due to political inactivity. In 1944, it adopted a programme based on the socialistic pattern of society and full democracy. The plan covered agriculture, industry, transport, distribution, utility services, currency and finance. The "Kashmir Plan" was based on "the democratic principle of responsible Government with the elective principle applied from the local Panchayat right up to the Legislative Assembly".

The New Kashmir Plan consists of two parts—Part I, The Constitution, and Part II, The National Economic Plan.

The constitution part dealt with, (1) citizenship, its basic rights and obligations, (2) the National Assembly, (3) The Council of Ministers, (4) Electoral system, (5) The Courts and the Advocate General, (6) Local Administration, (7) National Language and the amendment to the constitution.

The second part comprised of

- I. Production (a) agriculture, the peasant's charter
(b) Industry-The Workers' Charter
2. Transport—air, road and water
3. Distribution (a) marketing, (b) Trade and Commerce

4. Utility Services—(a) Public Health (b) Education (c) House Planning (d) Cultural Organisations (e) Social Insurance.

5. Currency and Finance

6. The Women's Charter.

In its introduction, Sheikh Moh'd Abdullah writes that "In our times, Soviet Russia has demonstrated before our eyes, not merely theoretically but in her actual day to day life and development, that real freedom takes birth only from economic emancipation of the masses. The inspiring picture of the regeneration of all the different nationalities and people of the U.S.S.R. and their working together into the united mighty Soviet State that is throwing back its barbarous invaders with deathless heroism, is an unanswerable argument for the building of democracy on the cornerstone of economic equality."

The communist ideology found favour with Sheikh Abdullah, G.M. Sadiq, D.M. Dhar and other leaders of the National Conference and with the help of Freda Bedi and under the guidance of the communists, Sheikh Abdulla got prepared a comprehensive plan and presented this in the form of a memorandum to the Maharaja. This plan was later published as the "New Kashmir" Manifesto and it was formally adopted by the annual session of the National Conference held at Sopore on September 30, 1944.

On the provisions of the Constitution, drawn on the lines of the Constitution of the U.S.S.R. Sheikh Abdullah observed :

"Thus, the National Conference envisages the future of New Kashmir in both political and economic terms. Towards that end, we have drawn up a scheme, which politically is based on democratic principle of Responsible Government, with the elective principle applied from the local Panchayat right up to the National Assembly. This is linked with the independence of the judiciary and ultimate responsibility of the executive to the people.

In the economic sphere, we have gone on the principle that planned economy is of the essence of progress and that without it, there can be no raising of the standard of living of the masses of the State.

...Now the time has come when they must dig deep into the

bowels of the earth and yoke the technique of modern science to the task of getting for themselves a bigger and better morsel of daily bread.

In addition to this, Abdulla got a lengthy Memorandum for presenting to the British Cabinet Mission, which was holding discussion with the representatives of various interests in India. "Abdullah", writes Bamzai, the noted historian, "returned to New Delhi in the middle of May 1946, when the memorandum was duly presented to the Cabinet Mission. It, therefore, became the Quit Kashmir Memorandum. It runs as follows :

"Today, the National demand of the people of Kashmir is not merely the establishment of a system of Responsible Government but their right to absolute freedom from the autocratic rule of the Dogra House.

"Nearly 100 years ago, the people of Kashmir became the victim of a commercial deal by the covetous agents of the East India Company. For the paltry consideration of 75 lakhs of Sikh currency rupees (less than half a million pounds sterling), the people of Kashmir, the land and its potential wealth were sold away to Maharaja Gulab Singh, the Dogra vassal of the Sikh kingdom.

"In the end, the memorandum mentions, "No Sale Deed, howsoever sacrosanct, can condemn more than 4 million to an autocrat when the people of Kashmir are determined to mould their own destiny and we appeal to the members of the Cabinet Mission to recognise the justice and strength of our case."

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Quit Kashmir Movement

After N. Gopaldaswami Aiyangar relinquished the post of the Prime Minister, the Maharaja appointed Raja Sir Maharaj Singh, Col. Sir K.N. Haksar and Shri B.N. Rau on the post, one after the other. And, when Sir B.N. Rau handed over the charge of Prime Minister, the Maharaja appointed a Kashmiri, Ram Chandra Kak, in his place. Kak had entered Government service as the Librarian of a local college and by dint of his ability and hard work, he rose step by step to the Minister-in-waiting of the Maharaja. He was more loyal than the king and soon after B.N. Rao's exit, he was appointed as Prime Minister by the Maharaja.

While the National Conference was holding its annual session in Srinagar in 1944, the Maharaja announced the appointment of two popular Ministers chosen from the elected members of the Praja Sabha. The National Conference selected a nominee of his own in the cabinet. But, due to the non-cooperation of the Government and indifference of the non-elected Ministers, he could not function. So, he resigned on March 17, 1946. A month later, in May 1946, the National Conference launched its "Quit Kashmir" Movement with the aim of forcing the Maharaja to transfer the power to the people.

Soon after the presentation of Memorandum by the Sheikh, he returned to the State and started a campaign of vilification of the royal family in the city of Srinagar. During the four days beginning on May 15, 1946, he delivered a number of speeches in the city in the course of which he openly incited the people to take to violence so as to compel the Maharaja to leave Kashmir. He heaped unmentionable abuse upon the person of the Maharaja. The result was that there were several clashes in the city and on May 18, 1946, there was a serious clash between the Hindus and the Muslims in the Amirakadal area. The police came to action and ruthlessly suppressed the agitation. The police arrested Sheikh Moh'd Abdulla on May 2, 1946 while he was trying to escape to British India. He was brought to Srinagar and imprisoned in the Badami Bagh military centre. The other colleagues were also arrested and kept in the Central Jail. The State Government had kept the military in different parts of the city. But still, a few processions were taken out which led to clashes. The police had to resort to firing, killing two men and injuring ten. Bakshi Ghulam Moh'd and G.M. Sadiq had left the State to direct the Movement from outside.

Nehru's Arrest

On hearing that the atrocities were committed on the people, Nehru, who was at that time busy in talks with the Cabinet Mission, rushed to the aid of the Kashmiri people. He was arrested as soon as he entered into the State territory. The Congress leaders, however, called him back. Jinnah, on the other hand, supported the Maharaja and declared the Quit Kashmir Movement as "an agitation carried by a few malcontents who were out to create disorderly conditions in the State." Following the return of Pt. Nehru to Delhi, the Kashmir Movement came to an abrupt end. And, by the middle of July 1946, the situation in Kashmir returned to normal. So, the State Government withdrew the ban on the entry of Pandit Nehru into the State. But, in spite of very brilliant pleading on behalf of S.M. Abdullah by Mr. Asaf Ali, he was sentenced to three years' imprisonment with a fine of Rs. 500; and, as a default in payment of the fine, he was to undergo

further imprisonment for 3 months.

Acharya Kriplani, the Congress President who also paid a visit to Kashmir and rightly advised the people of Kashmir to give up the demand of "Quit Kashmir" as directed against the Maharaja. "The Quit India" slogan against the British power was raised to eliminate alien rule. But Kashmir's Maharaja was the son of the soil of Kashmir. The Quit Kashmir demand, in his opinion, was unjust and unreasonable. It was a golden advice to the National Conference and we trust the slogan will die.

The monthly official bulletin of the Kashmir Government was quick to seize the hint and launched an attack against the politics of the National Conference : "The unfashionable Congress President, however, pointed out bluntly that the slogan had no basis from the point of view of justice and that the Congress had raised the Quit India slogan against the British because the British were foreigners whereas the Maharaja of Kashmir was a son of the soil. He advised the people to demand a people's Government under the aegis of His Highness, which Sheikh Moh'd Abdulla had said, would no longer satisfy him and his party..."

Gandhi ji's Visit in early August 1947

The partition of India was in the offing and Gandhi Ji found time to visit Kashmir in July 1947. He was impressed by the communal harmony that prevailed in Kashmir. Mahatma Ji paid a visit to the Maharaja at his palace and soon after R.C. Kak was dismissed and the Maharaja appointed the former Revenue Minister Gen. Janak Singh in his place as the Prime Minister of Kashmir.

*Sheikh Mohammad Abdullah
and Maharaja Hari Singh*

Sheikh Moh'd Abdullah, whom his people called Sher-e-Kashmir (the Lion of Kashmir)—strode the political scene of Jammu and Kashmir like a colossus. He was the greatest leader Kashmir ever produced.

He was an arch-foe of Maharaja Hari Singh. He had a pathological hatred for large number of Dogras whom he dubbed as staunch communalists and who wanted full integration of the State with India and abrogation of the much maligned Article 370 of the Indian Constitution which granted special status to Jammu and Kashmir.

The Sheikh had a towering personality. He was remarkable for his physical strength as also for his courage. He was six feet four inches in height, long-limbed, broad-shouldered and had piercing eyes. He had a deep voice and his spirit was firm and his soul daring. Sheikh Abdullah was the posthumous son of Sheikh Moh'd Ibrahim, a dealer in shawls and already a father of five sons.¹ Sheikh Abdullah was born in 1905 at Saura, an outskirts of Srinagar. He matriculated in Srinagar, took his B.Sc. degree from the Islamia College, Lahore in 1928 and his M.Sc. degree

at the Aligarh Muslim University. On his return, he became a science teacher in the State High School, Srinagar. Soon, he abandoned his job in 1931 and plunged in politics.

His activities began in Srinagar Reading Room at Fateh Kadal. Several young men of the Muslim community used to gather there. In 1929, they decided to approach the Maharaja with a petition, urging relaxation of recruitment procedures to enable Muslims of the State to enter into Government Service. When the request was turned down, the young men took recourse to agitation. The British Government, particularly the Resident and W.E. Wakefield, liked to fish in the troubled waters, and in order to cut Hari Singh to his size and control him, chose Abdullah.² Wakefield, who as Political Minister and the Police and Security Minister had been keeping a close watch on the Muslim leaders of the Reading Room, picked up S.M. Abdullah as the man who suited most of his needs to teach the Maharaja a lesson. Wakefield knew that Abdullah was very impressive and had a great capacity to arouse religious frenzy and passion among Muslims by reciting passages from the Holy Quran in a most sonorous voice which enthralled his co-religionists to their very depths. "The British had thus found a stooge after their own heart for using him as their tool against the Maharaja for teaching him a lesson and getting full control over the strategic area of Gilgit from the Dogra Ruler who had dared to challenge their authority there," writes H.L. Saxena in his book, 'The Tragedy of Kashmir', p. 108.

Sheikh Abdullah, along with the others, formed the All Jammu and Kashmir Muslim Conference in October 1932; an influential section broke away under the leadership of Maulvi Yusouf Shah while radical Muslims stuck to the Sheikh and the conservative elements followed round the Mirwaiz.

The advent of Sheikh Abdullah marked a turning point in the history of Kashmir. Being a silver-tongued mob orator in Kashmiri and gifted with convincing talk, he had tremendous confidence in his powers that gave him haughtiness and vanity. He was caught in a morass of contradictions and changed his stance and inclinations from time to time. He levitated because of the tremendous ovation and applause of the public. He converted his

Muslim Conference into "All Jammu and Kashmir National Conference." Nehru's obsession for him and his tremendous respect and love descended like a manna from heaven into his outstretched hands. Surcharged as Sheikh Abdullah always was with the anti-Dogra feelings, he skilfully worked on Nehru's anti-feudalism by impressing on him that he alone could win plebiscite in favour of India and forced him to accept the abolition of Maharaja Hari Singh's dynastic rule and his exile.

Sheikh Abdullah earlier had launched a mass hysteria in the Valley by openly challenging the role of the Maharaja to sit on the throne which was purchased, according to him, by paying Rs. 75 lakhs of rupees to the British. He proclaimed it as a 'Sale Deed.' This was his trump card against the Maharaja. According to P.N. Bazaz³, Sheikh Abdullah was neither intelligent nor could he care to read even the history of Kashmir. Sheikh Abdullah would have known that the whole of Jammu province and the frontier region and later Kashmir had been conquered by the Dogras. No doubt, Gulab Singh won Kashmir both by diplomacy and conquest. The Treaty of Amritsar with the British was only on paper and he had to conquer it with the force of arms. Of course, a contingent of British forces was of help to him. This has been fully explained in detail in the earlier chapters of the book.

Democracy of Sheikh Abdullah was only in name. In fact, it was simply a dictatorship. In the Constituent Assembly, there were members of only one party and no opposition. Sheikh Abdullah charged Maharaja Hari Singh of gross negligence of the welfare of his subjects. He complained that the Maharaja ran away on 27th October, 1947, carrying the treasure and even the furniture, abandoning his subjects to the mercy of the Pakistani raiders. This he stated not only in the State Constituent Assembly but even in the United Nations where he had gone as the member of the Indian delegation. The Government of India took no notice of his wrong utterances. Secondly, he also accused the Maharaja of delaying the accession of Kashmir to India. Thirdly, he said that the Maharaja was communal in outlook who did not care for the welfare of the Muslims of the State.

Sheikh Abdullah's treatment of Hari Singh was rough and rude and he used all means to harrass him. Sardar Patel's published letters are full of Hari Singh's complaints against the Sheikh's autocracy and despotism and his high-handed treatment of the Ruler.⁴ One might classify Sardar Patel as protagonist of the Maharaja and Nehru as the blind supporter of a tribune of the people who did not prove worthy of the trust. Patel knew that a change was necessary so also did Maharaja. But Patel wanted the change to be brought about decently, smoothly and properly. Sheikh Abdulla had, undoubtedly, shown his talent for going back on his commitments. He humiliated Maharaja Hari Singh and attacked his dignity, honour and self-respect. To a sane and sensitive man, this was most injurious to his mental and physical health and it acted as a slow poison to him which virtually killed him. He would have rather liked to attain martyrdom fighting in the defence of the country; after all, he belonged to the dynasty of warriors and the martial race of Rajputs and was fully trained in the military arts.

Sheikh Abdullah was full of vanity, Hari Singh knew. Abdullah trusted nobody and he himself could not be trusted. Shamim Ahmed Shamim⁵, Member of Parliament and editor of "Aina", an Urdu paper issued from Srinagar, in his article "Abdullah-Then and Now" published in the *Illustrated Weekly of India* dated November 12, 1979, says in the same weekly : "This peculiar conspiracy complex is a striking attitude of a dictator's growing sense of insecurity and is one of the symptoms of megalomania the Sheikh Abdullah has been suffering from." Maulana Masudi, the General Secretary of National Conference, in an interview he gave to Shamim, says in the same weekly, "When has he even tried to know, much less tried to elicit, anybody's opinion? Anything that comes to his mind becomes the last word with him and he expects everyone to accept it as the gospel truth."

Maharaja Hari Singh, in his pathetic letters to Sardar Patel, had dissected the mind of Sheikh Abdullah and examined his horrific enmity towards him. Abdullah was inconsistent, and as per the words of Shakespeare, "one foot on sea and one on shore.

To one thing constant never.” In dealing with the Maharaja, he broke all the promises and understandings. He promised to serve under the aegis of the Maharaja and the next moment he suffered from wilful forgetfulness and conspired against him, his dynasty and his throne. The Government of India took no cognisance of it till his foul tactics, arrogance and egoism boomeranged on them. In the Constituent Assembly in 1951, he upheld the decisions in favour of accession to India while rejecting the two-nation theory and two other alternatives, accession to Pakistan and creating an ‘independent Kashmir’, and later he changed his position; he wanted to be independent when there was no moral, political and constitutional justification in changing or reversing the earlier decisions.

Sheikh Abdullah was rough and impolite towards Maulana Azad about which the Maulana complained to Patel, but the latter was helpless. He abused Jinnah when he visited Srinagar whom he had earlier tried to woo; he deliberately humiliated Azad when he had come to sort out differences between the Sheikh and Bakhshi. Maharaja Hari Singh surely must have laughed up his sleeves when he was rude and rough to the central leaders when they came to seek a reconciliation with him. One has to consider how Maharaja Hari Singh could have sought reconciliation and friendly relations with the Sheikh when with his own colleagues and lieutenants like Ghulam Moh’d Bakshi, Mirza Afzal Beg, Ghulam Moh’d Sadiq, Sardar Budh Singh, Sham Lal Saraf, Pir Moh’s Khan and Girdhari Lal Dogra, who were also members of his first cabinet, he was at daggers drawn. He did not spare even Maulana Masudi and Prem Nath Bazaz with whom he was hand in glove.

It is miraculous how Dr. Karan Singh, son of Maharaja Hari Singh, could carry on with Sheikh Abdullah with all his psychological defects in the capacity of the Head of the State and get praises from the Sheikh. He smoothly arrested and dismissed the Sheikh when he had become wayward and thereby proved useful to the State and the country at that critical juncture when the Sheikh had virtually rebelled against the party and the Government of India.

But all said and done, we cannot ignore Sheikh Abdullah's virtues. Although he was a devout Muslim and could hypnotise the Muslim masses by singing the verses of the holy Quran, he was not a communalist. In his time, Hindus, Muslims and Sikhs lived in perfect harmony when whole of India, particularly Punjab, which surrounded Jammu and Kashmir, was in flames. He was secular in outlook and believed in socialism which is evident from his "New Kashmir Plan" which has been published in a booklet form. But incidentally, it shows the influence of communism.

He did not bow before the communalism of Jinnah and outright rejected his two-nation theory. He also persuaded the majority Muslim population of Kashmir to refuse to accept this theory, in which he was successful.

He played a great role in the accession of Kashmir to India. In fact, Nehru accepted the accession only when it was endorsed by Sheikh Abdullah. At the time of Pakistan's raid, he personally went to Delhi and pleaded vehemently with the Indian Government for sending the Indian armed forces to Kashmir to save it from the raiders' onslaught who were virtually knocking at the doors of Srinagar. In the absence of Sheikh, who was at Delhi, law and order in the city was maintained by his lieutenants and volunteers and they did not allow the pro-Pakistani elements to raise their heads and indulge in loot, arson and sabotage. The secularism in Kashmir is the legacy of the Sheikh.

When Sheikh Abdullah passed away in 1982 at the age of 77, long after the demise of Maharaja Hari Singh; he was given a hero's funeral with full official honours, although he had lived in political oblivion for nearly 22 years. Paradoxically, his dead body was covered with Indian Union flag though he did not write himself as Indian. Sheikh Abdullah criticised Maharaja Hari Singh for his hereditary rule, but he himself, before his death, installed his son Dr. Farouq Abdullah as the Chief Minister of Jammu and Kashmir in his place and the latter, in his turn, has made his son Omar Farouq as the President of the National Conference with the intention of installing him as the Chief Minister when the opportunity arose in future.

All the faults of Sheikh Abdullah were forgotten and millions

of people, including President Zail Singh and Prime Minister Indira Gandhi, Cabinet Ministers of India, members of the Parliament and Chief Ministers of other Indian provinces paid homage to him. The Valley was resounding with the words :

*Sher-e-Kashmir ka kia
I r s h a d ?
Hindu, Muslim, Sikh Ithad"*

Translation

*What is the command of Sher-e-Kashmir?
Hindu, Muslim, Sikh unity.*

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*Praja Parishad Movement
and Pandit Prem Nath Dogra*

The Jammu region forms the core round which the structure of the State was built by its founder—Maharaja Gulab Singh.

It stretches from Pathankote in the Punjab plains to the Pir Panchal mountains which divide it from the Kashmir Valley. The region has an area of about 10,000 square miles and a population of 11 lakhs. It includes the districts of Jammu, Kathua, Udhampur, Doda, Poonch and Rajouri and eastern parts of the districts of Riasi and Mirpur which together constituted the administrative province of Jammu till October 1947. The majority of the people, about 80 per cent are Hindus by religion. All of them are known as Dogras.

Being the original home of the ruling dynasty, the people of the region came to be looked upon as the ruling race of the State. This made them careless about their political development.

Thus, at the time of the transfer of power in the State from the Maharaja to the people, there was political vacuum in the Jammu region and there was no party which could share political power with the Kashmiri leaders who were quite advanced in the political sphere.

At this juncture, Prof. Madhok prevailed upon Pt. Prem Nath Dogra¹ to form a political party and hence the Praja Parishad was born in Jammu in the later months of 1947. It supported the progressive economic policies and was secular in outlook, but it was deadly opposed to the National Conference for not acceding fully with India. It wanted the State's full integration with India; one Constitution, one flag and one President, that is, the Indian Constitution, Indian flag and Indian Supreme Court and one election Commissioner to be adopted by the State. The abrogation of article 370 of the Indian constitution was its core issue. The original accession was only with regard to defence, foreign policy and communication.

Praja Parishad started agitation against the National Conference Government which shook the whole State and brought down Sheikh Moh'd Abdullah from his pedestal on which he stood. Pt. Prem Nath Dogra was the top leader of the Parishad, who was appointed its President in 1949.

He was born at village Smailpur, nine miles away from the Jammu city on 24th October, 1884. His father Pt. Anant Ram was an officer during the reign of Maharaja Ranbir Singh. He served as Superintendent of Ranbir Press, Superintendent of Royal Mahalkhana and Manager of State properties in India. Pt. Prem Nath lost his mother when he was hardly 9 months of age and thereafter his grandmaternal mother nurtured him, but she too died when he was only 9 years old. He matriculated in 1904 and obtained B.A. degree from the Forman Christian College, Lahore in 1908. He was a good sportsman.

After graduation, he was appointed as Tehsildar, Akhnour. He served as secretary to Governor of Kashmir in 1914. In 1926, Pt. Dogra was appointed as Settlement Officer, Muzafferabad and after some months, Wazir Wazarat in the same place, but due to the intrigue of some courtiers of Maharaja Hari Singh, he was prematurely retired on 18th July, 1932.

Then, he started his life as a social reformer. He rejuvenated the Sanatan Dharma Sabha, Jammu, Brahman Prathinidhi Sabha and Dogra Sadar Sabha by his progressive outlook and high ideals. Pt. Prem Nath Dogra was twice selected as member of the

Legislative Assembly (Praja Sabha) in 1936 and 1942. On 5th June, a Shakha (branch) of the R.S.S. was set up in Dewan Mandir, Jammu. It flourished due to the devoted workers like Shree Keshav Kapoor, Shree Narsingh Dayal, Shree Jagdish Abrol, Shree Durga Dass Verma, Prof. Balraj Madhok and Shree Sham Lal Sharma, etc. Pt. Dogra became its Pradesh Sanchalak.

Pt. Prem Nath Dogra² became the President of Praja Parishad in 1949 and started a national struggle for the abrogation of Article 370 of the Indian Constitution. He toured all over the country and met national leaders to mobilise public opinion. The leaders of the opposition parties in India were convinced and voiced the views of Pt. Prem Nath Dogra and the Bharatiya Jana Sangh, Hindu Mahasabha and Ram Raj Parishad started satyagraha in Delhi and thousands of people including Dr. Shyama Prasad Mookherjee, Shiv Dev Pandey, N.C. Chatterjee and others courted arrests.

The State Government coerced the people of Jammu. Permit system was introduced by which only those persons could enter the State who had the permit of the State authorities. Sheikh Abdullah struck the first blow to the Jammu province by carving Doda district out of Udhampur district on communal basis. In the first general election of 1951, wholesale rejection of the Parishad candidates was resorted to on flimsy grounds. As a result of that, 72 out of 75 members were elected on National Conference tickets. Parishad had boycotted the election. Dr. Karan Singh did not attend the opening session. Praja Parishad was opposed to Dr. Karan Singh's accepting the post of Sadar-i-Riyasat, but after a long discussion for three days, they got round on the persuasion of Dr. Karan Singh. Meanwhile, Maharaja Hari Singh had sent a Memorandum to the President of India in which he demanded that a referendum be held upon the retention or abolition of the ruling dynasty.

Pt. Prem Nath Dogra³ appealed to the people for supreme sacrifice and gave them the slogan "One President, one Constitution and one Flag (Ek Pradhan, Ek Vidhan, Ek Nishan). He demanded the application of full constitution to the State." In the meantime, Sheikh Abdullah started hobnobbing with foreign

diplomats and dignitaries and began to denounce India and its leaders. His fiery speech at R.S. Pora was not even liked by the late Pt. Nehru, although he had a particular dislike for the Praja Parishad leaders in Jammu because he thought they were communalists and their actions jeopardised India's position with regard to the Kashmir problem.

As the Government of India was looking at all this as a silent spectator, the people of Jammu started a strong agitation on 23rd November 1952. Thousands of Satyagrahis from Jammu courted arrests. Some top workers of the Parishad went underground; among them were Ram Nath Bhalgotra, Makhan Lal Aima, Brig. Ghansara Singh, etc. They toured India and apprised the people about the miserable happenings in Jammu and roused a general wave of sympathy for the Jammu people. Satyagrahis from India began to enter the State to court arrests. In this agitation, 16 persons died. Dr. Shyama Prashad Mookherjee entered the State without permit on 9th May, 1953. He was arrested and sent to Srinagar jail where he died in mysterious circumstances on 23rd June 1953. Dr. Karan Singh was not informed of his death and he learnt from unofficial sources after his body had been flown to Calcutta. Dr. Karan Singh had all along shown sympathy with the Jammu agitation and had written formal letters to the President and Nehru about the Jammu situation. On 10th June, he sent a report to Nehru who was in London at that time. Early in September, Dr. Karan Singh reported to the Government of India about his meeting with the Praja Parishad members. He informed him that the grievances of the Jammu leaders were genuine and insisted that the senior leaders like Maulana Azad, Katju and Ayyangar should meet the Jammu leaders and hear them with sympathy. He also informed Nehru that his father had sent Memorandum to the President regarding holding a referendum for retaining his ruling dynasty. Nehru altogether rejected both the things.

Meanwhile, the Jammu agitation was gaining momentum. So, Dr. Karan Singh again wrote to Nehru that the Bhartiya Jana Sangh, headed by Shyama Prashad Mookherjee and N.G. Chatterjee and other like-minded parties are launching a satyagraha

on an All-India basis. He urged Nehru that there should be a dialogue between the State Government and agitating leaders, but both Sheikh Abdullah and Nehru refused. Again, on 27th March, he wrote to Nehru that the gulf between Jammu and Kashmir has widened greatly over the last few months and this would harm the State in the years to come.

The whole of Jammu was in anguish and fury at the death of Dr. Mookherjee. He was martyred while fighting for the cause of the Jammu people. In fact, all the people of India mourned his death. Pt. Prem Nath Dogra was released on the same day and was made to fly to Calcutta with the dead body. Pt. Dogra and other leaders of the Parishad were invited by the Prime Minister of India and after due consideration, the agitation was stopped on 7th July, 1953.

Dr. Prem Nath Dogra expired on 30th March 1972.

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Maharaja Hari Singh, The Man

Maharaja Hari Singh had inherited a powerful physique, handsome features and riches from his father, Raja Amar Singh. Hari Singh had a high stature with a large head on his broad shoulders, long nose and a determined chin. His eyes were large and the natural colour of his skin was rather wheatish. His mien was grave and he was a man of iron discipline whose forte was self-respect. When he smiled, his mouth assumed a kindly expression, but he was unyielding as iron. He compelled admiration through the force of his moral character. Before Hari Singh's monolithic strengths and dignity, his adversaries appeared glib and poor in character.

Moral Character

What imparts him greatness is his being a stickler for morality, just as he was for his own honour and respect and so for his subjects. Nothing can be worse in a ruler than his immorality. He was not epicurian and voluptuous like many other rulers of the Indian princely States; he did not maintain a harem of concubines, courtesans and captivating maidens. It is said that youth is like a champagne which bubbles when the cork is drawn but there is no evidence to show that Hari Singh was profligate and dissipated in

his youth except that he became a victim of an unscrupulous attempt at blackmail in a long way and for a few days in 1921 when the case of Mr. "A" was to monopolise the headlines of certain British newspapers. No one has ever recorded having heard Hari Singh, the vigorous and virile young man, indulge in colourful love affairs. Nor did he ever like to listen to one complacently. In this regard, late Col. Kanwal Singh¹, who was his A.D.C., has written down the following incident :

Maharaja Hari Singh loved shooting and he had reserved a few game-hunting preserves (Rakhs) in Kashmir and Jammu. In Udhampur, he had five such areas. He used to plan a ten days' trip to Udhampur and stayed in his private rest house from where daily regular hunting parties for big or small games used to be arranged.

One fine autumn day the Maharaja, with his party, was coming down the hill from Mehra Nal Rakh in Krimchi area after a successful game hunting; two A.D.C.'s Col. Kanwal Singh and Captain Prithi Singh were sitting with the Maharaja in his personal "shooting-car". On both sides of the road, the bare fields stretched out, yellowed by the corn and wheat stubble covered the soil. Far off were green mountains; the scene was picturesque and romantic. Perchance, they saw a spring of sparkling cool water on one side of the road. There, some adorable damsels were filling their pots with water. Prithi Singh, in a splendid mood, spontaneously heaved a sigh and murmured : "Hey Ram, what a pretty maiden! I will die for your dazzling beauty!" Hearing this comment Maharaja Hari Singh got furious and shouted at him thus :

"Man, are you out of your mind?"

Prithi Singh turned pale and trembled.

"Don't you have a grown up sister at your home? How would you feel if someone passed such remarks at her?"

Maharaja Hari Singh ordered him to get down from the car and walk on foot to Udhampur, a distance of nine miles.

"Unlike many other rulers of Indian States", writes Dr. Karan Singh, "Maharaja Hari Singh had a great respect for women of the State and treated them accordingly. In fact, he ruthlessly abolished the prostitution in the Jammu and Kashmir State."²

Compassion for Man and Animal

Master Ghulam Mohammad, Golf professional at Kashmir Golf Club, Srinagar, writes that Maharaja Hari Singh was generous by nature and helped every poor man. It had become his habit. In one of his essays Ghulam Moh'd relates that one day, after enjoying a game at the Gulmarg Golf Course, the Maharaja and Ghulam Moh'd were returning to Srinagar. On the way to Magam village, he saw an old man. He waved to the vehicles going to Srinagar in order to stop and carry him to Srinagar, but none would stop. In the meantime, the Maharaja's car also passed and the old man lifted his arm for the car to stop. The Maharaja saw him and ordered the driver to stop the car, and acknowledged the old man's request for a lift. The Maharaja dropped the man at his destination at Amira Kadal and also gave him Rs. 100. On seeing the Maharaja, a crowd gathered there and expressed gratitude to him at his kindness.

Leave alone humans, Maharaja Hari Singh was kind even to animals. Ghulam Moh'd relates that once Maharaja Hari Singh was playing golf and he was attending to him. The Maharaja saw a tongawalla driving a tonga on the road far away. A lame horse was yoked to the tonga and was limping. The Maharaja called the man and purchased the horse for Rs. 600 and it was sent to the veterinary hospital for treatment. "This speaks", says Master Ghulam Mohammad, "of Maharaja's humane attitude even towards animals."

Off and on, the Maharaja showed an involuntary kindness. On one of the palace grounds in Srinagar, he saw a dog howling over the dead body of a bitch. Milk and biscuits were brought for the dog but it wouldn't eat and all night it stayed there. His Highness kept Kirpa Ram, the servant, on duty there to give water and more biscuits to the dog. It is said that Maharaja Hari Singh himself could eat nothing on that evening.

Mohammad Amin Pandit, a journalist, says that the Maharaja would usually order demolition of the columns and pillars under construction in the palace walls and buildings so that the labourers could earn additional wages.³

"He would, once a while, order his A.D.C.", says Mr. Pandit, "to bring his lunch amidst the labourers so that he could enjoy

his meals with his subjects. He could fluently talk in Kashmiri and questioned the labourers in Kashmiri.”

Altruism and Honesty

These were the main traits of Hari Singh's character. Altruism, the principle of considering the welfare and happiness of others as well as honesty were the two predominant traits of his character. Immediately after ascending the throne in 1925, he gave back all his personal jagirs of Baderwah and Kishtwar to the Government. He had inherited them from his father, Raja Amar Singh. Hari Singh said : “Since I shall, as a Maharaja, be receiving a privy purse from the state revenue, I should not, in fairness, covet for the Jagirs also.”⁴

He had the old palace complex built at Mubarak Mandi in Jammu and Sher Garhi in Srinagar for the State Government. He could claim them, but he ordered that the secretariat and important offices should be housed in these palaces.

He was strict in keeping all private expenses separate. There was a strict order that no Government vehicle or driver should be used from any Government department for his household in the palace. In fact, he kept his personal jewellery, diamonds and other valuables in the State Toshakhana, which are supposed to be still lying in the Srinagar Treasury of the State.

Maharaja was helpful without any discrimination. He donated the land behind the Dak Bungalow in Jammu to the Muslims for the purpose of Idgah. The Islamia High School in Jammu was housed in a dilapidated building; the Maharaja gave them the Gandu Chhowaru building for the purpose of establishing the school. It was a magnificent building.

Shree D.C. Prashant⁵, former Member of the Indian Parliament, relates a philanthropic story of Maharaja Hari Singh thus :

Once at midnight in January, an accidental fire broke out in a house of a poor Muslim in Jullaka Mohalla in Jammu. The people were asleep and none came out to help the man in extinguishing the fire. But someone had the sense to telephone the palace. The Maharaja at once called his two A.D.Cs and all the three rushed to Jullaka Mohalla on horses. The report about the arrival of the

Maharaja spread in the mohalla and everyone came out to put out the fire by bringing water in pots and buckets. The ruler supervised the whole operation. He expressed his deep sympathy to the victim and gave him Rs. 400 as relief, and soon after, the Maharaja ordered the purchase of a fire engine for the city.

Maharaja Hari Singh hated nepotism, favouritism and corruption. There is the case of the alleged illicit timber felling by Dinga Singh, an influential timber merchant, who was fined six lakhs of rupees. Another case is one of the faked T.A. bill prepared by one of the Game Wardens, at one time a great favourite and trusted A.D.C. of his, who was dismissed from the service. In 1932, ten per cent of the Army Officers found inefficient and careless or indifferent towards their jobs were turned out of their service, even though they belonged to Maharaja's own baradari or clan.

Although Maharaja Hari Singh was the fountainhead of all power in the State, he was not autocratic in the real sense as he decentralised power and authority and this followed down the ladder too. There was no interference from him except through the Prime Minister or the concerned Minister. The head of the forest department, Sir Peter Clutterbuck⁶, who had earlier retired as one of the most successful and well-known Inspector General of Forests of India, did not get even one opportunity in his three years' of re-employment as the Chief conservator of Jammu and Kashmir to meet His Highness except at formal parties despite his great contribution to the forest work and devotion to duty which was always highly appreciated. Sir Peter Clutterbuck said, "I loved the work because it was after my own heart. The forests have great future and potential. My only regret was that I was never able to see His Highness and discuss things with him personally."

Maharaja did not centralise all powers or initiatives in his own hands. He was a constitutional head. Dr. Karan Singh, his son, writes, "He never harassed the population for personal ends, living an aloof and self-contained life in the palace. His administration and system of justice is, to this day, accepted by impartial observers as having been better than those of the post-

1947 period. Corruption was far less and seriously punished whenever it came to light.”⁷

The immediate success of Maharaja Hari Singh was due to two causes—one, social and the other, administrative. In administration, he brought efficiency and considered merit as the criterion for appointment in Government and other services, although this brought him in conflict with an educated Muslim group. For his own sake, he had to choose the most capable to fill administrative and other positions, yet he had to please the Muslim masses; he must have stood for equality for all and at the same time, borne the merit of the individual in mind. These contradictions give rise to serious conflict.

The cause of his popularity was that he was not only a good administrator but a social reformer par excellence. He proved to be that rare type of a social reformer who takes up the task with a missionary zeal. The society had overgrown with poisonous weeds of evils like prostitution, early marriages, killing of infant girls, etc.; he ruthlessly uprooted these vices from the society. His reign was an ‘Era of Reformation’.

His Faults and Failures

Maharaja Hari Singh lacked pragmatism in politics. He floundered in the messy arena of politics; he did not possess the diplomatic acumen of his great grandfather, Maharaja Gulab Singh. He was obsessive and too stubborn to have any reconciliation, adjustment or agreement with his opponent if the occasion or circumstances so demanded. He did not have the attitude of a chess player who looks objectively, realistically and dispassionately. His personal feelings and sentiments overruled his discretion.

The Maharaja was of iron will and was never willing to modify his scheme to suit the weather of destiny, whether it was with regard to the British, Sheikh Abdullah or Nehru. His supple intelligence failed him at the right time. There is a school of thought which opined that he should have told Lord Mountbatten at Srinagar when he visited him in July 1947, that he and his Jammu province and Ladakh will go with India and let him have plebescite in the valley. This would have cut Abdullah to size

and made Nehru less dependent on Sheikh and the British also would have been happier. The minorities of the Valley could have been brought away from Kashmir as they have come now.

Sheikh Abdullah, on the other hand, proved a shrewd politician. He showed wonderful elasticity in compliance with the will of the circumstances. At first, he was a communalist and formed the Muslim Conference. Then, he changed the Muslim Conference into The National Conference and rejected the two-nation theory of Jinnah. He was in favour of accession to India but preserved his autonomy, a sort of republic in a republic. But, he later got the Maharaja exiled. But, in the end, his ambition drove the Old man far into the sea of politics and catch "Sheikhdom" and make Kashmir an El Dorado. Then, again, he came back and got reinstated in his former office and to former privileges.

Maharaja Hari Singh was a straightforward man. A ruler should know that everyone acts from self-interest, through love of pleasure, others seek public recognition in order to gratify their vanity, their jealousy or their ambition. To subjugate any individual and to achieve one's goal, one has not to take cognisance of motives in men and has to rely exclusively upon material means it is in rare cases that the magic of one's personality exercises a more puissant lure than the well-calculated material attractions. Maharaja Hari Singh never put on a mask; never simulated anger or joy to impress his adversary. Although he may have a genuine paternal relation with the people, affectional tones were only occasionally heard from him. Forgive and forget were not his character traits.

Maharaja Hari Singh irritated the British resident and in an outspoken speech at the Round Table Conference in London, Hari Singh demanded that the Gilgit Agency should be abolished and it should be handed over to him. This incited the British rulers who poisoned his life throughout. They started the communal game in Kashmir by instigating the Muslims against the Hindu Maharaja. In retrospect, one may say it was no use to treat the Resident shabbily; even Nehru treated the English dignitaries with great respect. Moreover, silence is golden at times; the Maharaja

was not a freedom fighter that he should have taken up the cause of the Congress at the Round Table Conference. And how nicely they treated him at the end! Gilgit was much needed by the Britishers and it was like the "Ancient Mariners" Albatross round the neck of Maharaja Hari Singh. He should have taken it out and thrown on the face of the British. It seems that his palace courtiers were his advisers. It is a defect with the rulers that they want to hear only what they wished.

In spite of being intelligent and imaginative, it took him time to comprehend the character of a man which resulted in fatal situations. One is surprised that even though he had disliking for the British, he appointed G.E.C. Wakefield as an important Minister in 1929. He came under the influence of this cunning and scheming Englishman. He had full faith in him⁸. P.N.K. Bamzai, the historian writes, "the Maharaja, ignorant of the forces that were rising at his feet, indulged in cheap pleasures of life and spent most of his time outside the State, leaving the field for Wakefield to set into motion the favourite game of playing the Muslim against the Hindu."

Several Muslim young men, who had received higher education from the Universities in India, particularly in Aligarh, were frustrated at not getting proper jobs. They organised themselves into a group at the Muslim Reading Room at Fatehkadal in Srinagar and started a campaign against what they deemed as the Hindu State. Bamzai further writes, "They had the tacit support of the British-Indian Government as well as the Maharaja's trusted Minister, Mr. Wakefield. The Maharaja, ignorant of the feelings and aspirations of the people, did not take any initiative to win back the goodwill and confidence of the people." They ought to have been provided with jobs relaxing the standard of merit in their cases. Thus, the whole matter would have been nipped in the bud. The Punjabi bureaucracy was unsympathetic and with "the direct encouragement by the British to agitators, the stage was set for consternation early in 1931".

The true information never used to reach the Maharaja; all the repression of the agitation was done at the behest of Lather and Wakefield. Wakefield was nowhere to be found at the time

of the turmoil, for he was chatting with the Resident at his bungalow. This agitation threw up Sheikh Moh'd Abdullah and he emerged as the most prominent leader of Kashmir.

No doubt, the Maharaja was an impassioned patriot. He wanted India to be free from the arrogant and intriguing British. They wanted the control of the State of Jammu and Kashmir. Soon after the British gave over Kashmir to Gulab Singh, they realised that they had made a great blunder. Almost as soon as he acquired Kashmir, he was subjected to strong pressures to allow them to have a say in the internal administration of the kingdom. Their intrigues for taking powers of the State continued down to Hari Singh's days. The British Government would keep the princes under their influence and control and would like them to do what they liked. Maharaja's natural self-respect and dignity would not allow him to kowtow the Residents and all powerful officials of the British Political Department. His invulnerable dignity could not endure effrontery to his self-esteem. He was sensitive enough to feel that the British would look spiteful and hate Indians high and low. It was not that he spoke carelessly in favour of freedom of India at the Round Table Conference. It was because of his pent-up antagonism that he expressed the words spontaneously. From this hatred for the British and his pride in the higher culture of India emerged his true patriotism.

Feudalism and Progressive Ideas

Maharaja Hari Singh's personality was a complex one. There are two strongly marked opposing tendencies in his nature that called for an extraordinary power of co-ordination. On the one side, he had the individualistic feudal strain that came from his forefathers and strong tradition. The feudal lords, it was believed, were the king's pillars and once they started cracking, it was the undoing of the kings. This principle of feudalism was on the concept of benign and humanistic monarchy. From the ancient times, kingship was prevalent in India. Then Muslims came and monarchy thrived which was mostly hereditary. In the monarchy of the Mughals, the kingship was hereditary and India progressed in every aspect. The British had constitutional monarchy along with democratic

form of Government. This kingship gave stability, security and peace. Dogra rulers followed hereditary principle. King was the symbol of unity, integration among different religious and ethnic groups. Kashmiris reached the zenith of prosperity during the time of Sultan Zian-ul-Abidin and the Jammu & Kashmir State prospered and became modernised during the Dogras.

On the other hand, the progressive, rational and enlightened strain came from his study of modern western books and experience that he gained from his foreign travels. But the general effect of these two elements was altruistic and he got ever-flowing sympathy for the people. He wanted to make his state a welfare and model State towards the attainment of which his youth was enthusiastically directed.

Earlier as a senior member of the State Council, he had the opportunity of touring the State and coming into direct contact with different sections of the people. Centuries of ruthless and cruel rule of Mughal, Afghan and Sikh governors had made the people miserable and poor as the church mice.

Sahukars had sucked the blood of the peasantry and they went about in rags and could hardly keep the wolf from the door. Hari Singh, as if with a magic wand, brought about a cataclysmic change in the lifestyle of the people, opened roads to the outside world and brought the tourists and provided water at the doors of the peoples' houses. There was electricity and education.

As he was not a revolutionary leader that he could do away without proper thought with feudalism, Sheikh Abdullah, in his revolutionary zeal all at once abolished the feudal system, depriving many people the source of their food. He promulgated Big Landed Estates Abolition Act. According to this Act, no one was allowed to possess more than 180 kanals of agricultural land, far in excess of this area owned by any individual was taken away from him and handed over to the tillers of the soil. But, actual facts are different. There are thousands of people in Kashmir who have 182 kanals of agricultural land but do not till it themselves. Moreover, hundreds of landlords, on getting information that surplus land was to be taken away from them, distributed the surplus to their relatives and friends each, getting a

piece of 180 kanals. P.N. Bazaz⁹ writes, "It is a groundless claim that the peasantry as a whole has benefitted in Kashmir. Those working on the land still possess the lands and tillers continue to be serfs as before...If Kashmiri peasants have been sharing the produce of the land with the landlords, the landlords had to pay the revenue and spend money on the improvement of the land; the responsibility of the landlord have been transferred to the peasant's shoulders. A peasant-proprietor would readily and willingly discharge...For the 'freedom' he has attained, he is made to pay in manifold way. There are examples where landlords who asked employed labour now could do so and they got no compensation and they virtually starved for they had no other source of income."

The Maharaja, of course, abolished the *Sahukar* System and instead replaced it with the co-operative system.

Democracy

Maharaja was a visionary and he knew absolute monarchy was anachronism. He felt that democracy was essential for the progress of the country and so he was not averse to it. Thus, he was the first prince of India who established State Assembly (Prajā Sabha), though on a limited franchise. If he were to give a full-fledged responsible Government at once, the result would be the rule of one party and dictatorship of one leader. This would mean the rule of the majority community, at the cost of the minority communities, regionalism, communalism, and discrimination; nepotism and corruption would be rampant. Sheikh Moh'd Abdullah emerged such a leader who was answerable to no one. He had the blessing of Pandit Nehru. His first demand was to provide service for the educated Muslim young men. This was done. Then he demanded legislature, which was initiated. Then, his demand was a fully responsible Government under the aegis of the Maharaja, and this too was agreed upon. Then he wanted the abdication of the Maharaja and his banishment from the State. Of course, throne has a glamour for anybody. The Maharaja could not be a Lord Buddha who would, one fine night, leave his charming wife and dear son and go far off to some secluded place

in a forest and meditate and leave the throne to Sheikh Moh'd Abdullah; for that the Maharaja did not have the spiritual bent of mind. So, his Prime Minister R.C. Kak had no alternative but to crush the "Quit Kashmir Movement" and say : "The place of a lion (meaning Sh. Abdullah) is either in a jungle or behind bars." Sheikh fumed and fired for some time and then was as cool as a cucumber.

Ram Chandra Kak was, no doubt, an able man. He rose by dint of his ability and hard work from the job of a petty Librarian of a local college to be the Prime Minister of the State. He was more loyal than the king. He could not give the correct advice to him. He was, like his master, in favour of remaining independent. God knows how he would have manoeuvred it and faced the music.

Secularist and Honest

Maharaja Hari Singh was first and foremost a secular ruler. He had no time and mind for religiosity, religious mumbo-jumbo, superstition and horoscope, so for all practical purposes, he was an agnostic. Unfortunately, later on when his son was seriously ill, he fell under the influence of one Mahatma, Sant Dev who was called Raj Guru. He was, of course, well-versed in Hindu scriptures. Nothing is known of his parentage, his birthplace and even his age. He was stationed in the Palace in the time of Maharaja Pratap Singh and as soon as he passed away, Sant Dev went away to Kud where he established an ashram. Earlier, he had an ashram in Bhandarwah. It is not known who inducted him again in the palace during the time of Maharaja Hari Singh. Nachint Chand, Maharani's elder brother, was very close to Sant Dev. When India was partitioned, he assured the Maharaja that there would be a great upheaval and chaos in the country and he prophesied that Maharaja Gulab Singh's flag would fly upto Lahore. Thus, in the political sphere, his influence proved destructive. He vehemently dissuaded the Maharaja not to accede to any dominion but remain independent. But when the Pakistani raiders swooped over Kashmir plundering and burning everything on the way, the Sant also left and stayed at Kud.

Constitution

Although the Maharaja was constitutionally at the apex of all the powers in the State, he was not despotic as his adversary Sheikh Moh'd Abdullah later proved to be. Justice demanded that the Maharaja must give proper constitution and democracy to the people in order to participate in the administration of the Government. He loved the British system of democracy and sensed the advent of democratic spirit in India and elsewhere. He appointed a Franchise Commission and in 1934, the Praja Sabha (State Legislative Assembly) consisting of 75 members was brought into being, and 60 of those members were non-officials including 33 elected members. In 1939, the number of elected members was raised to 40 and in the same year, the State Constitutional Act received Hari Singh's assent. He also appointed two elected members as ministers of his cabinet. He would have given full-fledged responsible Government to the State then and there, but he was a visionary and knew that it would mean the rule of the majority party, National Conference, and the dictatorship of one man, that is Sheikh Moh'd Abdullah, whose aim, he could visualise, was to capture all powers and then throw him out of his birthplace. The Sheikh had realised early that so long as Maharaja Hari Singh, remained the Maharaja, his dream of wielding absolute power in the independent Kashmir could not come true and this happened ultimately. A separate constitution with Sadar-i-Riyasat as the head was established, and if Dr. Karan Singh had not been prudent and sagacious, to accept the job, the Sheikh could have amended the constitution and himself wielded absolute power. In fact, power had brought about to Sheikh Abdullah despotic and totalitarianism tendencies. The franchise, on the larger scale, would have resulted in regionalism, communalism and corruption on a vast scale.

Kingship, Anomalous

Nehru and Patel were great men but sometimes great men commit great blunders. Maharaja Hari Singh, as many others, could not envisage that Nehru and Patel would agree to the partition of India, much against the advice of Gandhi Ji. In the wake of the

carnage that followed, one million Hindus and Muslims died and 15 million were mercilessly uprooted. Kashmir was an offshoot of the divisive two-nation theory.

Sheikh Abdullah's problem was to persuade his Muslim followers to reject the two-nation theory which had gained sway in India. His was a classic dilemma of a leader—how to lead without going so far ahead as to lose following. Sheikh had his own compulsions to contend with. If you have spent a lifetime preaching a crusade against the Maharaja, it is difficult to turn in your tracks and talk of sharing Government with the same Maharaja. Maharaja was, as revealed by Patel's letters, never so autocratic as Sheikh was in so much so that his high-handed treatment of the ruler was the most uncivilised behaviour. He did this to show his followers that he was the ruler and Kashmir was independent of India.

Maharaja knew that the change was imminent, but he wanted that the change be brought about decently and smoothly that would not banish him along with his wife from his home. This is what Nehru and Sheikh did.

We are concerned with the history of the subcontinent only so far as it is linked with the character of the Maharaja. He felt sore that reference of Kashmir's invasion was made to the United Nations. What was most intriguing to the Maharaja was the fact that when the Indian Army moved in and began pushing the raiders out of Kashmir, and there was a veritable retreat by the raiders, at that very moment, New Delhi agreed to a cease-fire under pressure from Lord Mountbatten.

If the Indian Army had been allowed to push on with the drive, the entire area right upto Gilgit and beyond would have been cleared, and there would have been no Kashmir problem to bother about. But, Lord Mountbatten planned otherwise, and managed to persuade the Indian Government to agree to the cease-fire which enabled Pakistan to hold on to a portion of Maharaja Hari Singh's State.

Maharaja Hari Singh was sincere in establishing a complete responsible Government under his aegis which Sheikh Abdullah had written to the Maharaja in his letter from the jail. Now, the

situation was so created that the Maharaja did not lose only his throne and home but his family got disintegrated in his old age. His wife, Maharani Tara Devi, used to the salubrious climate of the State could not, as she rightly or wrongly said, bear the burning sun of Bombay in summer and she had to go to Kangra; Yuvraj Karan Singh and Yuvrani had to be in the State. Maharaja Hari Singh lived alone in Bombay. Had he not been stoic enough and had he not got passion for racing and horse breeding, he would have had a nervous breakdown.

Honour came to the Maharaja first. "I would have liked to die fighting the Pakistanis at Gilgit. History would have compared me with Gen. Zorawar Singh, whereas as things turned out, I am practically nothing", thus lamented Maharaja Hari Singh in his last days.

It was characteristic of him that he sealed his lips during his lifetime and refused to say anything in self-defence and self-justification. After the forced relinquishment of his Gaddi, he retired into complete political isolation. He did not even once go to Delhi and plead with the Government that he should be allowed to live at his birthplace where he was to be cremated.

As a sportsman and stalwart of the great sport of racing, his memory will be cherished for long. He had love for polo, golf and chess. These extraordinary interests sustained him in the turmoil of his life and in the lonely years of his exile. He had suffered from diabetes for many years, but says Dr. Karan Singh¹⁰, "Because of the curious needle-phobia, he absolutely refused to take insulin injections. As a result, he developed a serious and extremely painful carbuncle on his neck in the late fifties. Although he kept it from us, we came to know of it from his jeweller Shanti Seth and were deeply worried. When we saw him next, we were shocked to see that he had grown thin. In fact, he was unable to walk for his obligatory evening drive to the stables to see his beloved horses." He was then sixty six years of age. He used to trim himself up and daily shaved in spite of his ill health. During the last days, he seemed to have some heart trouble and died of heart attack."

Now, the great Maharaja is dead, Lord Mountbatten the last

Viceroy of India is no more, Sheikh Moh'd Abdulla lies buried on the bank of the Dal lake in Srinagar, Pandit Nehru has been cremated and Mr. Jinnah, the founder of Pakistan, is also dead. But Kashmir continues to be a boiling cauldron and the plough is busy in digging the graves of thousands of unfortunate people. God is in His Heaven laughing at the vanity of human wishes.

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*Maharaja's Hesitation to Accession
and the Tribal Invasion*

The British imperialism was crumbling, and by 1947, the British were convinced that they could no longer rule India. So, on June 17, 1947, the Indian Independence Act was passed, declaring that on 15th August, 1947, India would become independent and part of the territories with a majority of Muslims was to be constituted into Pakistan and recognised as an independent and sovereign State.

With less than two months left for partition, one problem assumed menacing proportions. It was the claim of independence by rulers of larger princely States, encouraged by the key British officials. Jammu and Kashmir posed the difficult problem, involving as it did the competing ideologies of India and Pakistan, secularism and religious nationalism. Kashmir had the best claim of independence as the biggest princely state in the subcontinent. Its location intensified conflict. It was adjacent to the State of Tibet and Chinese province of Sinkiang. And only the narrow Wakhan corridor of Afghanistan separated it from the Soviet territory.

Most of the people of Jammu & Kashmir were Muslims, while

the ruler was a Hindu. Jinnah had earlier endorsed the right of the rulers to decide as to which dominion they would accede. He was thinking of Hyderabad, Bhopal, Junagarh and other States with Muslim rulers and Hindu subjects. Kashmir's tallest leader was Sheikh Moh'd Abdullah who had established the secular National Conference and worked closely with the National Congress. Abdullah had rejected Jinnah's overtures. He had become a symbol of Congress secular ideal. Sheikh Abdullah had declared : "We, the people of Jammu & Kashmir, have thrown our lot with the Indian people not in the heat of passion or a moment of despair, but by deliberate choice. The Union of our people has been focussed by the community of ideals and common sufferings in the cause of freedom."¹

Under the opposing pressures of the Congress and Muslim League, Hari Singh prevaricated. Mountbatten realised that unless Hari Singh decided in favour of acceding to India or Pakistan before August 15, the consequences could be disastrous. He flew to Srinagar and spent five days from June 18 to 23 there. What transpired between Hari Singh and Mountbatten has been narrated by Larry Colin and Dominique Lapierre in the book "Freedom at Midnight."² He told the Maharaja that he had brought the assurance from Patel on behalf of the future Government of India that as seemed natural with the overwhelming Muslim population and his geographical situation, Hari Singh Joined Pakistan. Furthermore he said, Jinnah had assured him that Hari Singh, even though he was a Hindu, would be welcomed and given a honoured place in his new dominion.

"I don't want to accede to Pakistan on any account," Hari Singh answered.

"Well", Mountbatten said, "It is up to you, but I think you should consider it very carefully since after all 90 percent of your people are Muslims. But if you don't, then you must join India. In that case I will see that an infantry division is sent here to preserve integrity of your boundaries."

"No," replied the Maharaja, "I don't want to join India either. I wish to be independent."

"These are just the words the Viceroy did not want to hear. I

am sorry.” he explained, “You just can’t be independent. You are a land-locked country. You are over-sized and under-populated. What I mind most is that your attitude is bound to lead a strife between India and Pakistan. You are going to have two rival countries at daggers drawn for your neighbours. You will be the cause of the tug-of-war between them. You will end up being a battlefield. That is what will happen. You will lose your throne, and your life too, if you are not careful.”

The Maharaja sighed and shook his head. The next two days were spent in fishing. Mountbatten insisted that they should have a formal meeting before his departure, but the Maharaja Hari Singh would not see him as he was suffering from stomach upset and his doctor did not allow him to attend their meeting. Thus, Mountbatten returned unsuccessful without any commitment from the Maharaja to join either of the dominions.

Prem Shankar Jha, in his book “Rival Versions of History : “The correspondence in the India Office Records Library shows that Britain not only expected, but wanted Kashmir accede to Pakistan. It tried its best to persuade India not to accept Maharaja’s accession even when the raiders were barely 17 miles from Srinagar. When Kashmir did accede to India, it did all it could to keep the door open from the decision to be reversed. This makes it possible to understand Britain’s stand on accession and the position it took in the United Nations Security Council over Kashmir which caused great hurt to Pandit Nehru and poisoned India-British relations in the fifties and sixties.”³ He continues to say, “Why was Britain keen that Kashmir should go to Pakistan?... The real reason was that the British had assigned a place to Pakistan in its strategic design, and Pakistan’s possession of Kashmir was an integral part of it. The difference became apparent as one follows British reactions to the development of the Kashmir crisis.”

The Maharaja’s indecision about accession to either India or Pakistan was not looked by Pakistan with apprehension. It believed that Kashmir was in its pocket, for the Hindu Maharaja, in his own interest, would accede to Pakistan. They thought that Maharaja’s autocratic rule would not be acceptable to India.

But the Maharaja is not to be blamed for his indecision. The

Radcliffe Award had not been announced and the main road link which was then the supply line to the State passed through Pakistan. The only link with India could be through Gurdaspur district which was a Muslim dominated area and hence was supposed to go to Pakistan. So, the Maharaja was in a fix.

Cyril Radcliffe, the most capable legal expert and an honest man, had been given the task of partitioning Punjab and Bengal. He was to be assisted by panels of four judges in each province drawn from the rival parties, but, as Mountbatten told him, they would not agree on anything. He was to draw the boundary lines according the contiguous areas of Muslims and Non-Muslims. "In doing so, he would be "taking into account other factors". No one told him what other factors should be. In discussing these he would be under the 'unending arguments' both from Nehru and Jinnah. He would decide alone and the responsibility was only his and it should be done before August 15, 1947, no matter if there were errors and mistakes.

Here, it may be mentioned that Lahore contained 50,00,000 Hindus and 10,00,000 Sikhs and 60,00,000 Muslims. Lahore had about equally balanced population and it was claimed by rival parties. The fall of the Unionist Party in early March of 1947 resulted in serious disorder. The riots affected principal cities like Amritsar, Lahore and Multan while many of the greatest incidents took place in rural parts of Rawalpindi and Amritsar.

The March massacre was the first time the genocide intent to wipe the "other community" was manifested openly. It was a genuine imprint of the ethnic cleansing and reciprocal genocide between Hindu/Sikh and Muslims that was yet to be enacted in the following months of August-September, 1947. The violence started from March 1947; a concerted campaign of riots and demonstration had forced a Hindu-Muslim-Sikh coalition Government, that had run the province for a decade, to resign and the Governor, Sir Evans Jenkin, had to take the administration of Punjab on his own hands. Already, one lakh Hindus and Sikhs had fled from Lahore out of fear. Many Sikh shrines were in Amritsar, the fountain-head of Sikhisms, but it was wedged between Moslem area, the district of Gurdaspur.

A.P. Jain writes : “The district of Gurdaspur was situated in the extreme north-east of Punjab and was the land route to Jammu and Kashmir. It was composed of four tehsils Gurdaspur, Batala, Pathankote and Shakargarh. Shakargarh had a clear Muslim majority and it went to Pakistan. Of the rest, Pathankote was the northern-most, and it was only tehsil where non-Muslims outnumbered Muslims by about 60 per cent. Two of the adjoining tehsils of Gurdaspur and Batala had narrow Muslim majority. These three tehsils formed a compact land-mass and could not be divided without isolating the non-Muslim majority of Pathankote.”⁴ Besides, Amritsar had to be given to India and its connection with India was through these tehsils.” Thus, Sir Cyril was confronted with the choice of awarding all the three tehsils either to the dominion of India or Pakistan. He gave them to India.

Lahore, besides Karachi, was the only large city and he gave it to Pakistan. In Bengal, the Chittagong Hill Tract had a scanty Muslim population⁵, but it was surrounded on all sides by Muslim majority areas, so Redcliffe gave it to Pakistan. Now, in the euphoria of getting Lahore and Chittagong Hill Tract, Pakistan forgot about Gurdaspur, but soon, the decision on Gurdaspur was assailed by Pakistan. There are rival theories about the allotment of Gurdaspur to India which have been discussed threadbare by Shankar Jha and Lamb. As soon as Pakistan came into existence, the great problem they had to face was how to tackle the unruly tribal people, who inhabited the track of almost barren and mountainous land that exists between the North Western Province of India and Afghanistan. The area of these territories is about 25,000 square miles and the population is about 2,378,000.

These people are fanatic Muslims who are ferocious, warring and quarrelsome. They are backward and uneducated and do not follow any disciplined trade, and their occupation in the British regime was to come down from the heights of their area and plunder villages lying within the territories of the British Government. They also used to kidnap persons from these villages and even towns and release them after the payment of ransom. They could not be suppressed and the British Government had to

pay huge amounts to them to keep them in peace. But still, the British Government had to resort to bombardment and killing these people.

But Pakistan could not afford to use these methods of the British Government. They could not pay such huge amounts of money and purchase their peace. Besides, resorting to violent methods would make them hostile to Pakistan and bring a bad name to the Islamic State. Now, the easiest way to tackle this menace was to recruit them into a force and lure them to enter to the 'Paradise on Earth', that is Kashmir, where they could fight the atrocities of the Hindu ruler and his Dogra army. So, they equipped them with arms and ammunition and provided them the necessary transport which would carry them across the Pakistan territory to force their way to Kashmir and win it for Pakistan. Despite the efforts of Pakistan to get Maharaja Hari Singh to accede to the dominion of Pakistan by proper political and constitutional way, they had to secure Kashmir by force of the arms. Besides, Kashmir's importance to Pakistan involved security, economics and ideology. Most people of Jammu and Kashmir were Muslims, while the ruler was a Hindu. Its transport links were mainly with Pakistan; the rivers which transported its timber, flowed in the same direction. On the basis on which British India was to be divided, the case to include it in Pakistan was hard to rebut, except that Jinnah had earlier endorsed the right of the rulers.

The Maharaja had entered into a standstill agreement with Pakistan, ensuring the State's essential supplies, communications and common services. After a month or so, however, complaints began to reach that Pakistan had held back supplies of food, sugar, salt, petrol kerosene oil, etc., and that batches of Pakistani nationals had reached the State territories on the western border of Jammu province. It was a clear attempt to coerce the Kashmir Durbar into accession to Pakistan.

Organisation of Tribal Raid

Shortly afterwards, Mehr Chand Mahajan, the Prime Minister of the State, learnt that a tribal raid was being organised by the

Pakistani Government with the acquiescence of the British Governor of the Frontier Province. The object was to coerce the Maharaja and take possession of the city of Srinagar before the 'Id, which fell towards the end of the month of October. Mahajan was informed by one Muslim friend, who had travelled from the Frontier province to Srinagar, to apprise of this. "The Maharaja", writes Dr. H.L. Saxena in his book "The tragedy of Kashmir", "was however, misled by an intimate Pathan friend of his in the palace to believe that there was no serious danger to the State and all these rumours were merely a part of cold war, intended to coerce him into acceding to Pakistan."⁶

The Maharaja was over-confident of his power and thought that a battalion of Dogras could easily meet such a challenge. He was, perhaps, oblivious of the fact that his Chief of the State Forces, who was an Englishman, Major-General Scott, had, before leaving the State, so dispersed the army in small units in far flung areas that they had ceased to be effective. In Muzafferabad and Domel from which sides the tribesmen were to enter the State, there was only one battalion of the State forces commanded by Col. Narain Singh, but his unit had about 50 per cent Muslims who could not be trusted in the communal situation that had arisen.⁷ The Maharaja sent a word to Col. Narain Singh twice or thrice to disarm this part of the unit, but Col. Narain Singh said that they were his most loyal soldiers and had served under him in Burma and elsewhere and he was not prepared to listen to such a suggestion so long as he was in command. As events proved, the colonial was quite wrong in his appreciation of the situation. He met his death at the hands of his Muslim troops who joined the raiders and led them on the road to Srinagar from Muzafferabad. An order had been given by the Maharaja for the destruction of the Kishenganga bridge at Muzafferabad. The Chief Engineer was sent there for the purpose, but he was unable to do so as, it is said, he had no dynamite. To get dynamite he went to Delhi, but before he could return, the raiders had entered the State by using this very bridge. A similar attempt to destroy the Kohala Bridge also failed.

After the sack of Muzafferabad, the invaders continued their

progress along the Jhelum Valley road towards Srinagar, bringing death and destruction to the inhabitants of villages and town dwellers on their way. So, the tribal people were let loose on Kashmir territory. On October 22, 1947, a large force of armed raiders entered Muzafferabad in 300 lorries. It was led by Sairal Hayat Khan.⁸

“The young leader of the invasion’s advance guard was Jubilant”, writes Laperie and Dominique. The operation could not have been more successful. The route to Srinagar lay open before the Pathans, 135 miles of paved, undefended road, a promenade without danger they could complete before daybreak. With the first light of the dawn, thousands of Pathan tribesmen would sweep into the sleeping capital of Hari Singh. Sairal Hayat Khan and his advance guard would overwhelm the Palace. He would, he thought, bring the Maharaja his breakfast tray and with it the news that was going to fly the world on this 22nd October, 1947. Kashmir belonged to Pakistan. The tremendous onslaught of the Pakistani raiders was very serious. The Maharaja had no alternative but to approach the Government of India for military assistance to protect the people of the State from depredations of the raiders and he did it on October 24, 1947.

On 25th, Sheikh Moh’d Abdullah flew to New Delhi to personally appeal to the Indian cabinet to despatch armed forces to help Kashmir to push back the invaders.

The triumphant march of the raiders was temporarily stopped at a distance of 65 miles from Srinagar by the demolition of a bridge and the gallant resistance of about 150 men under the command of Brigadier Rajinder Singh of the State army, who was killed fighting the memorable ditch battle.

Bamzai, the historian writes : “But he had saved Srinagar by checking the advance of the enemy for three valuable days. This interval had enabled the air-field in the capital to receive the first wave of defenders from India.”⁹

Dr. H.L. Saxena remarked, “There was one more reason that saved Srinagar from falling into the hands of the Pakistani raiders whom Mr. Jinnah had chosen for carrying out his plan of celebrating Id in the Mughal Gardens of Srinagar on October 26,

1947. When these raiders found their way blocked by Brigadier Rajendra Singh, they did not bother very much about fighting against the State forces, but instead indulged in looting, murdering and raping all the non-Muslims in the town of Baramulla and making merry over the booty. This misbehaviour on the part of the tribal raiders also went a great way in delaying their move towards Srinagar. It was as a result of this that when their way became clear to move forward after Brigadier Singh and his men had been done to death on October 26, 1947, it was already too late and they were not able to capture the air-field at Srinagar, where the Indian army planes could alight early next morning.”

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*Brigadier Rajinder Singh :
Saviour of Kashmir*

The poet says :

*“The gods are the rulers of our Times,
And yet fame is created by our own deeds;
Why should the heart allow the heaven to threaten?
Resolve to become immortal
And you will be as gods upon the earth!”*

Such a hero was Brigadier Rajinder Singh.

“The heroic exploit of Brigadier Rajinder Singh and his ill-assorted band of a few regular soldiers, cooks, mess-waiters and orderlies who had taken up arms on his orders, is unique in the military annals of the world,”¹ writes P.N. Bamzai, the historian. Rajinder Singh² was born in June, 1899 in a small hamlet of Bagoona (now called Rajinder Pura after him). It is situated at a distance of 20 miles east of Jammu in the Jammu & Kashmir State. He belonged to Dalpatia family of Rajput clan of Jamwals. The story of bravery and sacrifice ran in the family. His grandfather was a war veteran with seven battle scars on his body. His father Subedar Lakha Singh, a junior officer in the State Forces, died when Rajinder Singh was only six years of age. His uncle Lt. Col.

Gobind Singh educated and brought him up with all affection. He passed his graduation from the Prince of Wales College, (now called Govt. G.M. Science College, Jammu) in 1921.

Immediately after graduation in June, 1921, he joined the Jammu & Kashmir Army as Commissioned Officer. Being hardworking and dedicated to his profession, he rose in the ranks quickly. He was promoted as Captain in April, 1925, a major in July, 1927, and a Colonel in October, 1935. He became Brigadier in May, 1942, and took over as the Chief of the Army Staff in the rank of Major General on 14th August, 1947 in place of Major General H.L. Scott. Rajinder Singh commanded the 6 J & K Infantry and held the appointment of General Staff Officer at the J & K Army Headquarters. Besides this, says Major General Govardhan Singh (retd.), "He also had varied experience of serving in the civil administration of the staff of the late ruler of the State, Maharaja Hari Singh, a superb ruler, administrator and hard task master." The year 1947, Brig. Rajinder Singh's year of destiny, found him at the head of the State Forces which were soon to undergo an ordeal of fire in which he was himself to play the great heroic role.

At Jammu & Kashmir headquarters in Srinagar, the information about the tribal invasion was received in the morning of 22nd October, 1947, when Col. Narain Singh of 4 J & K spoke over the wireless. He talked to Capt. Nasib Singh, a Staff Officer at Army headquarters. He told him that a large force of tribesmen had crossed into the State territory that morning. They attacked Muzafferabad and then started looting and burning the city. An hour later, another message was received. It said that the officers' mess was under fire. Men could not reach it due to heavy sniping of the enemy. Then there was silence, and in the early afternoon, the 4 J & K wireless message came to the effect that commanding officer had gone towards the lines. "We are fired at from all directions. I am going to destroy my set."

The Maharaja had just arrived in Srinagar from the tour of the battle front in Mirpur area. He was taken aback on hearing the news. This is obviously the work of his evil star, he must have thought then. He picked up the telephone and said to Patel : "Nothing is left to me but courage. Troops, troops, ammunition, if

you want to keep Kashmir." Hari Singh never wraps up his doings in mystery, as the politicians of those days wanted to do. "We are discussing, don't worry." was the reply. The magic of these words reassured him, though he was somewhat alarmed for there was urgency; even the arrival of Indian troops would take time. With the entire battalion on the Kohala-Muzafferabad having disintegrated, there was no one to stop the raiders from reaching Srinagar. The Maharaja took personal charge of the operational situation.

The Maharaja walks too and fro in the garden with arms locked behind. He summons Brigadier Rajinder Singh and entrusted the command of a company of strength of 150 (mostly staff and students) supported by a section of medium machine guns and a detachment of 3 inch mortars. Three other Officers, Capt. Prithi Singh, Capt. Khazan Singh and Lt. Nasib Singh are also placed under him. "You must sacrifice your personal life to the peace and happiness of the State and history will thank you for the sacrifice. I am not insensitive to the misfortunes of your family..."

There is no doubt that there was something imperious in Maharaja's nature, his glance and his speech. Everyone obeyed his orders. Rajinder Singh saluted him and the Maharaja clasped his hand and wished him well.

Brigadier Rajinder Singh had the reputation of being a man of talent and was not overshadowed by the crisis. He was calm and not irritable of mien. He and his force left Srinagar at 6.30 p.m. It was pitch-dark and heavily raining. This seemed to symbolise the ludicrous aspect of time's revenges. The prospect was fraught with danger but he who has courage, despises what lay about. "Time is everything," he realises. So, he must rush to Uri.

He reached Uri at midnight. Uri had been selected as the main defensive position. The Brigadier left the defence in the care of a small party and moved forward with a major portion of forces towards Garhi to contact the enemy. In the morning of 23rd October, the first clash took place half a mile short of Garhi. He was fired upon heavily. The enemy had advanced unchecked looting and pillaging whatever came in the way. They looked like vultures clad in uniforms patched with many colours and had rushed from the heights of the north-western tribal areas.

The road was full of men, women and children escaped from hell, moving towards Srinagar in vehicles, carts and on foot. They had left their homes where their forefathers had lived for generations.

The Maharaja must have been ruminating in his mind : “We are sacrificing our lives; Rajinder Singh has gone to face the immeasurable misfortune while the politicians at the centre like chess players are playing the diplomatic game and wish to browbeat me.”

In a head-on collision, the enemy, due to his overwhelming number, significantly got the better of the State force, so Rajinder Singh had to withdraw at the main position at Uri. The action at Garhi revealed that the enemy was not just a motley crowd of tribesmen, but a well-organised and better equipped force in a large number. It was impossible to check their onslaught for an appreciable time unless reinforced considerably. In the morning, Brigadier Rajinder Singh went back to Baramulla to telephone Srinagar. He spoke to Brigadier Faqir Singh, Commander of the Srinagar Brigade and asked for reinforcement. Brigadier Faqir Singh promised to send another 70 or so men, including a section of medium machine guns and a 3 in. Mortar detachment. Brigadier Rajinder Singh returned to Uri later.

Meanwhile, the Maharaja had taken over personal command of the Army headquarters in Srinagar. He sent for Captain Jwala Singh of 1 J & K and told him to collect what troops he could find in Badami Bagh barracks and proceed immediately towards Uri with a written message for the Chief of Staff.³

MILITARY DEPARTMENT ARMY ORDER

Brigadier Rajinder Singh is commanded to hold the enemy at Uri at all costs and to the last man.

Reinforcement is sent with captain Jwala Singh. If Brigadier Rajinder Singh is not contacted, Capt. Jwala Singh is commanded to hold the enemy at all costs and to the last man. He will do his best to contact Brigadier Rajinder Singh.

Sd/- Hari Singh (Maharaja)

23-10-1947

Capt. Jwala Singh, with reinforcements consisting of men from 8 J & K, a detachment of 3 in. mortar and a section of medium machine guns, left Srinagar at 1.00 a.m. and reached Uri at 3 a.m. on 24th October.

At Uri, the enemy seemed to be all around the J & K defensive. To check their attack, they demolished the steelgirder bridge. There was one defect in the position as it could be easily by-passed by the enemy's marching elements. Brigadier's small force could not cover all the approaches. The enemy column, nearly a thousands strong and equipped with modern weapons, launched attack in the night of 24/25. The next position the Brigadier selected to give a fight was near Bunyar in the area of the old ruins.

The Bunyar battle was the last one. The Brigadier occupied the position on the night of 24th and 25th October and prepared the trenches and bunkers by the morning of 25th October. Brigadier Rajinder Singh ordered Capt. Jwala Singh and Capt. Nasib Singh to destroy the two bridges across the Jhelum at Bunyar. They did this but not before some tribesmen had already crossed over.

At Bunyar, by the morning of 26th October, he was again attacked and this was beaten back. Fighting continued for the whole day and the defenders also suffered many casualties but anticipating the enemy's outflanking move, Brigadier Rajinder Singh decided to withdraw during the night to give the next battle at Seri ridge, just west of Baramulla.

Meanwhile, patrol reports indicated that the enemy was resorting to outflanking tactics, establishing road blocks in the rear by felling trees across the road.⁴ As they tried to rush their vehicles through, the driver of the second last vehicle, in which Brigadier Rajinder Singh was travelling, was killed. The Brigadier started driving himself when he too was shot in the leg making it impossible for him to drive. Most of his men in the vehicle were either dead or wounded. Brigadier Rajinder Singh was mortally wounded. His men carried him on their backs but he was too heavy for those exhausted men. The Brigadier insisted that the men should leave him there. He ordered them to hide him under

a culvert and to make their own way to Baramulla as best as they could.

That was the last that was heard of the gallant Brigadier. But he had saved Srinagar by checking the advance of the enemy for three valuable days. The interval had enabled the air-field in the capital to receive the first wave of defenders from India.

The Brigadier would not go back, as he had promised his master that the enemy would come over his dead body, little knowing that the valiant soldier had done his duty. He had saved the Valley, for at that very moment, the Indian army was concentrating to be flown to Srinagar. The Instrument of Accession to India had been signed by the Maharaja and had been delivered to the Government of India. The Army arrived at Srinagar by 1300 hours on the same day.

Brigadier Rajinder Singh⁵, according to Major General Govardhan Singh, was a quiet man who spoke little but acted big. What he said was the outcome of deep thought and reflection. He was always calm and cool and nothing ever disturbed him. He could resolve the most difficult problem logically into a simple issue and give detailed instructions on how to do it. He had a sharp analytical mind and tactical appreciations were his forte. He was considerate towards his subordinates and they loved him.”

“Brigadier Rajinder Singh for his devotion to duty and gallantry”, says Major General D.K. Palit, “was posthumously awarded the *Maha Vir Chakra*, thus becoming the first recipient of a Union of India gallantry award.”⁶

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The Winter

*“When joys have lost their bloom and breath
And life itself is vapid,
Why, as we reach the Falls of death
Feel we its tide more rapid?”*

—Thomas Campbell

Accession of Kashmir to India

The situation regarding the attack of raiders was grim and discouraging. When the Indian Defence Committee met on 25th October, 1947 to consider the Maharaja's appeal for aid, Lord Mountbatten¹ and the Senior British Officers of the Indian Army opposed to undertake the military operation against the raiders. It was impracticable, they thought, to send troops to the State with which India had an inadequate road link. The discussion lasted for many hours but with no result. Then, V.P. Menon, Secretary of States Ministry, was sent to Srinagar to get an eyewitness report of the situation in Srinagar in Mission with Mountbatten.

The information which V.P. Menon brought back to the Defence Committee the next day (October 26) was certainly disturbing.

He reported that "he had found the Maharaja unnerved by the rush of the events and the sense of his lone helplessness. Impressed at last by the urgency of the situation, he had felt that unless India would help immediately, all would be lost. Later in the day, on the strong advice of V.P. Menon, the Maharaja left Srinagar with his wife and son. Menon had impressed upon him that as the raiders had already reached Baramulla, it would be foolhardy on the part

of the Maharaja to stay in the capital.”²

Bamzai³ writes, “The account of ghastly acts being perpetrated by the raiders as reported by Mr. Menon, and the importations of Sheikh Abdullah to come to the rescue of the helpless Kashmiris moved the Indian leaders and “at great risk and difficulty”, they made up their mind to intervene. October 26 was taken up by a prolonged conference of the cabinet in which Mr. Mehar Chand Mahajan, representing the Kashmir Government and Sheikh Abdullah, on behalf of the National Conference, took part. Lord Mountbatten presided playing the dual role of a constitutional head of the Indian dominion and the watchman of his country’s interests.

“When it became clear to him that the Government was determined, against the military advice of their Chiefs of Staff who were British—and himself—to send troops in response to the request from Kashmir for aid, he returned to a change about accession.”

Campbell-Johnson : “He considered that it would be the height of folly to send troops into a neutral State where we have no right to send, then Pakistan could do exactly the same thing, which could only result in clash of armed forces and war.”⁴

The cabinet accepted the advice of Menon; he flew to Srinagar and on the same day, returned to Delhi and gave an assessment to the Indian cabinet. The Maharaja had offered to accede. Menon strongly pleaded that the offer of accession would be accepted and Kashmir be saved from destruction but on Lord Mountbatten’s strong persuasion, a condition was attached; after the raiders were driven back and peaceful condition restored, the final decision on the accession of Kashmir would be taken by ascertaining the will of the people of Kashmir.

Menon flew back armed with the papers of accession to Jammu and on 26th October, 1947 the Maharaja signed the Instrument of Accession. The accession was confined to the three subjects of foreign affairs, defence and communications.

According to India’s Independence Act of British Parliament, Maharaja Hari Singh was the only competent authority and had an absolute jurisdiction to take decision on the future of the State. The fact was fully supported on the floor of the Constitutional Assembly

of Pakistan by its founder, Moh'd Ali Jinnah himself.

Given below is the text of the letter dated October 26, 1947 from Maharaja Hari Singh to Lord Mountbatten, the Governor General of India :

My dear Lord Mountbatten,

"I have to inform your Excellency that a grave emergency has arisen in my State and request immediate assistance of your Government.

As your Excellency is aware, the State of Jammu and Kashmir has not acceded to the dominion of India or Pakistan. Geographically, my State is contiguous to both the dominions. It has vital economical and cultural links with both of them. Besides, my State has a common boundary with the Soviet Republic and China. In their external relations, the dominion of India and Pakistan cannot ignore this fact.

I wanted to take time to decide to which dominion I should accede, or whether in the best interests of both the dominions and my State to stand independent, of course, with friendly and cordial relations with both.

Accordingly, I approached the dominions of India and Pakistan to enter into Standstill Agreement with my State. The Pakistan Government accepted this Agreement. The dominion of India desired further discussions with representatives of my Government. I could not arrange this in view of the developments indicated below. In fact, the Pakistan Government are operating Post and Telegraph system inside the State.

Though we have got a Standstill Agreement with the Pakistan Government, she permitted steady and increasing strangulation of supplies like food, salt and petrol to my State.

Afridis, soldiers in plain clothes, and desperadoes with modern weapons have been allowed to infiltrate into the State at first in Poonch and then in Sialkot and finally in mass area adjoining Hazara District on the Ramkot side. The result has been that the limited number of troops at the disposal of the State had to be dispersed and thus had to face the enemy at the several points simultaneously that it has become difficult

to stop the wanton destruction of life and property and looting. The Mohara power-house which supplies the electricity to the whole of Srinagar has been burnt. The number of women who have been kidnapped and raped makes my heart bleed. The wild forces thus set let loose on the State are marching on with the aim of capturing Srinagar, the summer capital of my Government, as first step to overrunning the whole State.

The mass infiltration of tribesmen drawn from the distant areas of the north-west Frontier coming regularly in motor trucks using Mansehra-Muzafferabad Road and fully armed with up-to-date weapons cannot possibly be done without the knowing of the Provincial Government of the north west Frontier Province and the Government of Pakistan. In spite of repeated requests made by my Government, no attempt has been made to check these raiders or stop them from coming to my State. The Pakistan Radio even put out a story that a Provisional Government has been set up in Kashmir. The people of my State, namely the Muslims, generally have taken no part at all.

With the conditions obtaining in my State and the great emergency of the situations as it exists, I have no option but to ask for help from the Indian dominion. Naturally, they cannot send the help asked for by me without my State acceding to the dominion of India. I have accordingly decided to do so and I attach the Instrument of Accession for acceptance by your Government. The alternative is to leave my State and my people to free-booters. On this basis, no civilised Government can exist or be maintained. This alternative I will never allow to happen as long as I am Ruler of the State and I have life to defend my country.

I may also inform your Excellency's Government that it is my intention at once to set up an interim Government and ask Sheikh Abdullah to carry the responsibilities in this emergency with my Prime Minister.

If my State has to be saved, immediate assistance must be available at Srinagar. Mr. Menon is fully aware of the situation and he will explain to you, if further explanation is needed.

In haste and with kindest regards.”

Yours sincerely,

Sd/-

Hari Singh

The Palace, Jammu

26th October, 1947

**Instrument of Accession of Jammu and Kashmir State
dated 26th October, 1947 signed by Maharaja Hari Singh**

“Whereas, the Indian Independence Act, 1947, provides that as from the fifteenth day of August, 1947, there shall be set up an independent Dominion known as INDIA and the Government of India Act, 1935, shall, with such omissions, additions, adaptations and modifications as the Governor-General may by order specify, be applicable to the Dominion of India;

And, whereas the Government of India Act, 1935, as adopted by the Governor-General, provides that an Indian State may accede to the Dominion of India by an Instrument of Accession executed by the Ruler thereof.

Now, therefore, I, Shriman Inder Mahander Rajrajeshwar Maharajadhiraj Shri Hari Singhji, Jammu and Kashmir Naresh Tatha Tibet adi Deshahipathi, Ruler of Jammu & Kashmir State, in the exercise of sovereignty in and over my said State, do hereby execute this my Instrument of Accession and;

I hereby declare that I accede to the Dominion of India with the intent that the Governor-General of India, the Dominion Legislature, the Federal Court and any other Dominion authority established for the purposes of the Accession but subject always to the terms thereof, and for the purposes only of the Dominion, exercise in relation to the State of Jammu and Kashmir (hereinafter referred to as “this state”) such functions as may be vested in the Dominion of India, on the 15th day of August, 1947 (which Act as so in force is hereafter to as “the Act”)...

Sd/-

Hari Singh

Maharajadhiraj of Jammu and
Kashmir State

Acceptance of Instrument of Accession of Jammu and Kashmir State by the Governor-General of India on 27th October, 1947 :

I do hereby accept this Instrument of Accession; Dated this twenty seventh day of October, nineteen hundred and forty seven.

Sd/-

Mountbatten of Burma
Governor-General of India

Reply dated 27th October 1947 from Lord Mountbatten to Maharaja Sir Hari Singh

My dear Maharaja Sahib,

Your Highness' letter dated 26th October, 1947 has been delivered to me by Mr. V.P. Menon. In the special circumstances mentioned by your Highness, my Government have decided to accept the accession of the Kashmir State to the Dominion of India. In consistence with their policy that in the case of any State where the issue of accession has been the subject of dispute, the question of accession should be decided in accordance with the wishes of the people of the State, it is my Government's wish that, as soon as law and order have been restored in Kashmir and its soil cleared of the invader, the question of State's accession should be settled by a reference to the people.

Meanwhile, in response to your Highness' appeal for military aid, action has been taken today to send troops of the Indian Army to Kashmir to help your own forces to defend your territory and protect the lives, property and honour of your people. My Government and I note with satisfaction that your Highness has decided to invite Sheikh Abdullah to form an interim Government to work with your Prime Minister.

Sd/-

Mountbatten of Burma

It would be relevant to remark here that it was Lord Mountbatten who suggested the idea of "provisional accession"⁵.

Campbell-Johnson writes in that and said, "That unless it was made clear that this accession was not just an act of acquisition, this in itself might be touch of war. He, therefore, said that in reply to the Maharaja's accepting his accession offer, the should be allowed to add that this was conditional on the will of the people being ascertained as law and order was restored."

This argument was redundant as Pakistan had already committed an act of war by giving material and other help to the raiders. Shivpuri, in his book "The Grim Saga", says that "in any case, the Indian cabinet was taken in by Lord Mountbatten's persuasive logic with the result that India, of her own volition, took half of the cake when Kashmir had offered the whole."⁶

Then again, later, Lord Mountbatten, it seems, had persuaded Pandit Nehru to accept the idea of a plebscite under U.N.O. in so much so that Nehru declared in a broadcast, "We are prepared, when peace and law and order have been established, to have a referendum under international auspices like the United Nations."⁷

Recently, Prof. Bhim Singh, President of Panthers Party, has well said, "According to India's Independence Act of British Parliament, Maharaja was the only competent authority and had an absolute jurisdiction to take decision on the future of the State. The fact was fully supported on the floor of the Constitutional Assembly of Pakistan by its creator, Moh'd Ali Jinnah himself. Any challenge to the legality of the accession amounts to a challenge to the legality of partition of India as both flow from the same Act. Moreover, the Maharaja was fully supported and backed by the entire people of Jammu & Kashmir and all the political parties of the State in this regards."

Bamzai also says, "The accession was not conditional is proved by the fact that it was accepted by the Governor-General in precisely the same way as in the case of the other States. The accession was thus complete in fact."⁸

References

1. Bamzai, P.N.K. : Kashmir and Power Politics, 1966, p. 108
2. *Ibid*, p. 108
3. *Ibid*, p. 109
4. *Ibid*, p. 109
5. Bamzai, P.N.K. : Kashmir and Power Politics, 1966, p. 110. He quotes from Campbell-Johnson's Mission with Mountbatten.
6. Sivpuri : The Grand Saga, p. 115, quoted by Bamzai in his "Kashmir and Power Politics", 1966, p 111
7. Bamzai, P.N.K. : Kashmir and Power Politics, 1966, p. 114
8. *Ibid*

Turn of The Wheel of Destiny

The inner conflict in Jammu and Kashmir revolved round two strong personalities, dissimilar and diametrically opposite to each other, His Highness, Sir Hari Singh and Sheikh Abdullah. They were different to each other in inheritance, environment and their psychological make-up. Of course, both were proud, the latter more. Maharaja Hari Singh's rule was legitimately based on heredity. He was a successor of the great warrior and statesman Maharaja Gulab Singh. Sheikh Abdullah was a son of a small shawl trader. He would call himself and deluded himself being the real ruler and based his right to power on the support of the people. He lead a luxurious life and drove in a specially imported cadillac even though the people of Kashmir were very poor.

In September, 1947, before the invasion of Pakistani raiders, Sheikh was in prison on a charge of sedition, but the dynamics of history made him to seek his release. He wrote to Maharaja Hari Singh an apologetic letter¹ on 26th September which reads as follows :

May it Please Your Highness

It is after about one and a half year's incarceration that—as long wished—I had an opportunity of having detailed talks with Thakur Nachint Chand Ji. What unfortunate things

happened during this period in the State I need not mention. But this is now realised by every well-wisher of the State that many of the regrettable happenings of the past have mainly been due to the misunderstandings which appear now to have deliberately been created by interested people in order to achieve their own ends. R.B. Ramchandra Kak, the ex-Prime Minister, through his mischievous methods and masterly manoeuvrings, brought these misunderstandings to a climax and succeeded in his attempts, though temporarily, to a certain extent. He painted me and my organisation in the darkest colours and in everything we did or attempted to do to bring your Highness and your people close ; base and selfish motives were attributed to me. But God be thanked that all these enemies of your Highness and the State stand exposed today.

In spite of what has happened in the past, I assure Your Highness that myself and my party have not harboured any sentiment of disloyalty to Your Highness' person, throne or dynasty. The development of this country and the betterment of its people is our common interest and I assure Your Highness the fullest and loyal support of myself and my organisation. Not only this, but I assure Your Highness that any party within or without the State which may attempt to create any impediment in our efforts to gain our goal will be treated as our enemy and will be treated as such.

In order to achieve the common aim set forth above, mutual trust and confidence must be the mainstay. Without this, it would not be possible to face successfully the great difficulties that beset the State on all sides at present.

Before I close this letter, I assure Your Highness once again of my steadfast loyalty and pray that God under Your Highness' aegis bring such an era of Peace, Prosperity and Good Government that it may be second to none and be an ideal for others to copy.

Your Highness' Most Obedient

Subject

S.M. Abdullah

This letter brought Sheikh Abdullah's release from jail and subsequently a meeting took place between him and Maharaja Hari Singh at the palace. He even presented a gold sovereign to the Maharaja as a token of his loyalty. But soon, the situation changed due to the Pakistani invasion and accession to India.

Abdullah was appointed as Head of the Emergency Government, but the normal Government powers continued to be carried out by the Maharaja through his Dewan, Mehar Chand Mahajan. However, such an arrangement did not work and it was doomed.

Sheikh Abdullah's position was quite unsafe.² He had to make the Muslims of Kashmir to oppose the two-nation theory of Jinnah. He had his own compulsions to contend with. If you have spent a lifetime preaching a crusade against an "Oppressive" Maharaja, it is difficult to turn your tracks and talk of sharing Government with the same oppressor. The Sheikh had realised that as long as Sir Hari Singh remained Maharaja, his dream of wielding absolute power in Kashmir could not come true.

Sardar Patel's letters are full of complaints against the Sheikh's autocracy and the high-handed treatment of the ruler. The wrangle between the Maharaja and Sheikh Abdullah became insoluble. Sheikh Abdullah charged Maharaja with cowardice when he had gone from Srinagar to Jammu on the persuasion of Mr. V.P. Menon. A barrage of vituperative propaganda was launched by the National Conference and was published in the newspapers in many parts of India.

Then arose various other disputes. "For a proud and highly sensitive man like my father", writes Dr. Karan Singh, "these attacks were naturally a source of anguish and anger. It is to his abiding credit that, despite tremendous provocation, he maintained a dignified silence in public, and for the rest of his life, said or did nothing that could have harmed the national interest at that critical juncture." However, he did protest to Sheikh Abdullah in a memorandum³ dated 3rd December, 1948 :

Prime Minister

I would like to draw your attention to the malicious propaganda which is being carried on against my person

inside the State and outside. I presume this has come to the notice of the Prime Minister and the Ministry, but I find that no steps have been taken either to counteract or ban such activities. I am sending herewith some copies of extracts of the speeches of some of the Ministers and National Conference leaders which also offend in the same manner.

I am sure that you will agree that it is most improper both on constitutional and moral grounds for Ministers to indulge in this kind of propaganda. I put it to you that it should be as much the concern of my Government as of myself to ensure that the person of the Constitutional Head of the State, the dignity and position are fully respected and that any tendency to the contrary, from whatever quarter, is dealt with promptly and severely. I hope you will take suitable action immediately to counter these tendencies and this propaganda, and I will be glad if you will let me know as soon as possible what you propose doing.

3-12-48

MAHARAJADHIRAJ

This letter is given by Dr. Karan Singh in his *Autobiography*. He further says : "No reply is on the file, but Sheikh Abdullah could hardly have been expected to respond favourably."

Sheikh Abdullah had great support of Jawaharlal Nehru. Hari Singh wrote very often to Sardar Patel, Minister of Home Affairs and the States Ministry who were opposed to the harassment of Sheikh Abdullah. A letter⁴ written on 20 April to Sardar Patel is significant. He wrote :

My dear Sardar Patel,

As I have mentioned to you and to Mr. Menon and Mr. Shankar also once or twice, there is one aspect of propaganda which has distressed me beyond words, particularly as it affects me not only my position as a Ruler but my personal honour. I refer to the wild and baseless allegations that are made against me that I left the capital at the dead of night and removed the truck loads of furniture and other belongings. I would ordinarily have dismissed these allegations but to my great regret and profound shock, they have found

expression in some of the utterances of my present Prime Minister. I would invite your attention to the speech which Sheikh Abdullah made before the Security Council in which he said the following words :

‘The Maharaja, in the dead of night, left the Capital along with his courtiers and the result was absolute panic. There was no one to take over the control. This is the manner in which administration changed hands and we were de facto in charge of the administration. The Maharaja later on gave it a legal form.’

‘How entirely diversified from true facts this allegation is would, I am sure, be borne out by your Secretary, Mr. Menon at whose instance I reluctantly left Srinagar for Jammu. The other allegation that truck loads of belongings were removed is absolutely false and fantastic. The fact is that some lorries carrying the families of those officers who had already left for Jammu in Government work and families of servants followed me. I felt morally responsible to afford transport facilities to these families. All my household effects which usually remain permanently at Srinagar have been and are still there, and I am sure you will appreciate that such speeches and allegations when made by responsible and highly placed persons in the administration and by members of the National Conference are bound to create disaffection and promote feelings of estrangement between the ruler and his people.

‘You might ask why I am resuscitating this matter after so much lapse of time since the speech was made, but apart from the fact that those allegations are still being persisted in and are being given credence under continuous propaganda, the speech of my Prime Minister is being distributed in a pamphlet form headed ‘Kashmir : Appeal to World Conscience’. I hope your Ministry will succeed in giving a lie to this propaganda by means of an authoritative pronouncement or communique explaining the correct facts and by persuading Sh. Abdullah to make amends by the lapse which he has made.

‘While I am on this subject, I should also like to refer to one important aspect of the propaganda which is being carried on against me on the lines that I was a despotic and autocratic ruler, that the popular movement was directed against the Dogra tyranny and the present position has been reached as a result of fight put up by the people against me and my regime. Apart from the fact that I am prepared to maintain and establish to the satisfaction of any impartial person that at any given time, since, 1934, the reforms which I gave to my people were in advance of those given by the Ruler of any State in India and my attitude in relation to India’s constitutional advancement has been much more progressive than that of any Ruler I should like to ask whether any useful purpose could be served by raking up the past. For my part, I am trying to forget all that was unpleasant in the past. Am I wrong in claiming a similar response from the persons in relations to me? Moreover, by presenting me as an unmitigated autocrat is perhaps not realised that they merely help Pakistan propaganda. I should have thought that they would themselves realise the expediency of countering this propaganda of Pakistan rather than keep old animosities, for, as some knowledgeable persons have told me, the jurisdiction of Poonch and Mirpur revolt can be sought in the pages of some of the publicity material issued by the Ministry.

‘I hope that instructions from you to Sheikh Abdullah on this point would go at least some way in repairing the damage done. I can assure you that had I not felt both the matters to have an important bearing from the propaganda point of view in order to win the State of Jammu and Kashmir for a permanent association with the Indian Dominion, I would not have laid so much stress on them.

Yours sincerely,

HARI SINGH

Sheikh Moh’d Abdullah, who had the support of Nehru, was too arrogant to listen to Patel, who felt helpless in the matter.

Maharaja Hari Singh has well and sincerely emphasised two points : *One*, that Sheikh Abdullah was acting as his arch-enemy.

His behaviour was not a normal and reasonable one, as was expected from him. *Second*, Maharaja Hari Singh had emphasised that he was not an autocratic and despotic ruler, as alleged by Sheikh Abdullah, but a progressive one who had made reforms in the State more than any other ruler of an Indian State. But the boot was in the other leg. The truth was that it was Sheikh Abdullah who had become despotic. His behaviour towards the Maharaja was obnoxious, which utterly dismayed him.

Earlier Nehru, having sent the Kashmir's case to the UNO, had made India a pawn in the hands of the foreign powers and thereby, a long-drawn uncertainty prevailed in Kashmir and Abdullah became cock of the roost. The thought prevailed that ultimately the dispute would be resolved by holding plebiscite in Kashmir under UNO. Nehru was convinced that it was Sheikh Abdullah who could win the plebiscite in favour of India. Abdullah now "could demand his pound of flesh". He made Nehru to believe that as long as Maharaja Hari Singh remained in the State, it was impossible to win the plebiscite, for the Muslims in the State hated him.

"The basic fact was", writes Dr. Karan Singh in his Autobiography that "my father and Sheikh Abdullah represented two political cultures so dissimilar and disparate that the possibility of any compromise was virtually non-existent. My father belonged to the feudal order, and, with all his intelligence and ability, was not able to accept the new disposition and swallow the populist policies of Sheikh Abdullah. Sheikh, on the other hand, a charismatic mass leader and a superb orator in Kashmiri, was imbued with a bitterly anti-Dogra and anti-monarchical attitude."⁵

Nehru tended to tilt on the side of Sheikh for he had no alternative. Hari Singh tried to preserve the royalty when it was plain on the wall that the Maharaja could not survive. Maharaja Hari Singh was not a diplomat and he had not the elasticity of reconciliation. He was confronted with forces which were hostile towards him; even Sardar Patel, with whom he had a rapport, could not come to his rescue, for India was already committed to the policy that the final decision on Kashmir's accession would be decided by the will of the people of Kashmir. Abdullah

undoubtedly had a big following in the valley and if he would withdraw his support for India, she would lose the plebiscite.

Thus, the wheel of destiny for the Maharaja had come a full circle and the Government of India had to bow before the wishes of Sheikh Abdullah and advise the Maharaja to leave the State lock, stock and barrel and nominate his son Yuvraj Karan Singh as the Regent in the State. The Maharaja had no alternative but to accept Government of India's proposal. All the same, he felt that it could be possible for him even to return. He was determined not to abdicate and wrote a long letter to Sardar Patel. This letter reveals the turmoil in the mind of Maharaja Hari Singh, which is given in full. The letter was written by the Maharaja on 6th May 1949.

My dear Sardar Patelji,

With reference to the discussions I had with you on 29th April and 1st May, 1949, I have been revolving the matter in my mind and am now in a position to let you have my settled reaction to the proposal in regard to my temporary absence from the State which you put to me.

I should like to say at the outset that I was completely taken aback by this proposal, but coming as it did from you, in whom I have, since the very beginning, placed implicit trust and confidence and whose advice I have throughout followed on the many questions affecting me personally and my State both in the present and in the future, I have been able somehow to adjust myself to it. I would not, however, be human if I did not express my sense of keen disappointment and bewilderment at having been called upon to make such a sacrifice of prestige, honour and position when all along I have been content to follow, sometimes even against my judgement and conscience, the advice in regard to the constitutional position in the State which I have been receiving from the Prime Minister of India or yourself, sometimes even against arrangements which were agreed to only a few months before. Nor would it be fair on my part to conceal from you my own feeling that while Sheikh Abdullah has been allowed to depart from time to time as suited his inclinations from the pledged and written word, to act

consistently in breach of loyalty which he professed to me prior to release from jail and the oath of allegiance which he took when he assumed office, and to indulge openly along with his colleagues in a campaign of vilification and foul calumny against me, both inside the State and outside, I should have had to be driven from position to position each of which I thought I held on the advice of the States Ministry.

The contrast naturally fills me with poignant feelings. However, once again putting my complete trust in your judgement and benevolent intentions towards us, I might be prepared to fall in with your wishes and to absent myself from the State for a period of three or four months in consideration of the fact as emphasised by you, namely complication created by the reference to U.N.O. and the plebiscite issue.

There are, however, certain questions arising out of this proposal on which I would venture to make my position clear to you and on which I would be grateful to have your assurance. I hope you will appreciate the necessity of my seeking these assurances. I have to think of immediate future in the light of my bitter experience of the last several months and I owe it to myself, my family and my dynasty to procure a clear declaration in respect of these matters :

1. I should like to be assured that this step is not a prelude to any idea of abdication. I should like to make it clear now that I cannot entertain even for a moment and am fully prepared to take the consequences. I regard such a demand from my Prime Minister and his colleagues as a clear breach of the many understandings on which the constitutional arrangements have been based from time to time and a positive net of his disloyalty, treachery and deception.

2. Sheikh Abdullah should be clearly told to stop the campaign of vilification against me and to abandon all activities, both on his part and that of his followers, aimed at securing my abdication. I feel that the sacrifice which I am being called upon to make would be in vain if I continued to be the target of their public or private attacks.

3. There should be a clear assurance of protection of myself and my adherents against any victimisation. In this connection, I should like to draw your attention to the facts that have been reported to me about persons having been detained in jail for their failure to sign for my abdication.

4. The question that I should remain out of the State for three or four months for reason of health will, I am afraid, not to be believed by anybody and is likely to give rise to many misgivings and speculations within and outside the State as

- (i) everybody knows that I am not in such a state of health as would necessitate a long rest outside the State. I have, on your advice, been recently touring parts of Jammu Province in the heat of April.
- (ii) For everybody in bad health, Kashmir is considered to be the best health resort and it will certainly look strange if I went outside the State giving out that I am staying there for reason of health.
- (iii) Wherever I take my temporary residence, I cannot confine myself to the four walls of the house. I am bound to meet people, and when they meet me, they will never believe that I am staying there for reason of health.
- (iv) Some other reason which may be plausible and may also at the same time not compromise my dignity and position, should be given out. The best thing, would be that the Government of India should find a suitable position for me in Delhi where my services may be utilised in a fitting manner during the above period of 3 or 4 months.

5. It is a matter of paramount necessity that Her Highness should remain with Yuvraj in the State during the period of my absence. He is young and impressionable and requires paternal guidance and personal supervision of at least one of the parents. I can see no reason either of political expediency or justice in insisting on the separation of a mother from her only child whom she is seeing after thirteen months of absence abroad.

6. My private estates, houses and other property should be protected against the aggressive acts of Sheikh Abdullah's party. They will attempt to take possession of my houses, gardens, lands and other property. The Indian Dominion should guarantee against that act of aggression. While I am there, they dare not do these things, but in my absence, they will attempt this. I have received information that even during the last few days, after I left Jammu for Delhi, encroachments have been made on my lands in Srinagar.

7. No change should be made without my consent in the present arrangements regarding the State Forces on the constitutional position, prerogatives, etc. of the Ruler as now subsisting. Arrangements will continue to draw my staff (both State and private departments) from amongst officers of my forces. Guards mounted by my forces at my palaces will continue as at present as per agreement reached vide my letter of 30th August and Mr. Menon's reply of 3rd September thereof. I shall also take whatever staff, etc., I require with me outside.

8. I should be entitled during my stay in India to suitable strength of military guards wherever I stay.

9. Yuvraj's safety and protection should be the concern of the Indian Dominion. State and Indian Military should guard his person.

10. Outstanding matters with the State Military, Civil Lists, Hazur Departments, etc., should be decided with me immediately.

In conclusion, I wish to say that I shall take the final decision on getting assurances from you on the points above mentioned.

With kindest regards,

Imperial Hotel
New Delhi
6th May, 1949.

Yours very sincerely,
HARI SINGH

Sardar Patel's reply which came from Dehradun after a fortnight is given below :

My dear Maharaja Sahib,

Thank you for your letter dated the 6th May, 1949.

2. I am very glad to know that Your Highness has reconciled yourself to the proposal which I put forward in my discussion with you. It was with no light heart that I did so. No one can be more cognisant than myself of the attitude which Your Highness has adopted ever since you signed the Instrument of Accession. I am grateful to your Highness for the spirit of co-operation and understanding which you have always extended to me and also for the kind sentiments which you have expressed. I can assure Your Highness that, before putting forward my proposal, I had, after careful consideration, come to the conclusion that the interests alike of your Highness, the dynasty and the country demanded the step which you have now agreed to take. I know fully well the personal sacrifice involved in it; but, I am sure, along with so many other changes to which Your Highness has accustomed yourself, you will undertake this step also with a sense of duty to your country and in a spirit of calm resignation to the superior dictates of events.

3. Regarding the points which Your Highness has referred to me, I would like to state that the question of Your Highness's abdication does not arise. We have made the position quite plain to Sheikh Mohammad Abdullah and I hope there will be the end to the public controversies centering round this matter as well as the derogatory references to Your Highness in the press and on the platform in the State. Your Highness will, of course, appreciate that the future constitution of the State would be determined by the duly elected constitutional assembly. I am afraid, in the absence of any specific instances of victimisation to which Your Highness refers in paragraph 4, it may not be possible for me to give any assurances, but I can tell Your Highness, if any instances are brought to my notice, we shall look into them and try to see that justice is done.

4. I appreciate what Your Highness says in regard to the reasons for your remaining outside the state, but I feel that it would be best just to say that Your Highness has decided, after the strain of the last so many months and continued ill-health, to stay out of the State for a few months. The actual period need not be stated.

5. We have carefully considered the question of Her Highness staying with the Yuvraj during your absence, but for a variety of reasons, we feel that it would be best, for the present, for her also to stay away for a while. Later, she can certainly visit the Yuvraj from time to time, and the Yuvraj can also visit Your Highness and Her Highness occasionally.

6. We would be grateful if Your Highness would let me have a list of the private estates, houses and other property belonging to Your Highness and referred to in para 6 of your letter. On receipt of the list, we shall take up the matter with your ministry. In the meantime, I hope that, with the understanding that has been reached with Sheikh Moh'd Abdullah on the various controversial issues, he will himself take steps to safeguard Your Highness's property against encroachment. In particular, I hope that the feelings which he entertains for the Yuvraj will succeed in closing the chapter of the past several months and in introducing a healthy change in the approach of both the Government and the National Conference workers to these and other problems affecting Your Highness and the family personally and the dynasty in general. I hope that no need for a change in the arrangements to which Your Highness has referred in paragraph 7 would arise, but should any need arise, we could, of course, consult Your Highness. We would also make necessary arrangements for guarding your stay in India, and we take full responsibility for Yuvraj's safety and protection.

7. As regards outstanding matters, we have already informed Your Highness separately that your civil list has been fixed at Rs. 15 lakhs, out of which Rs. 6 lakhs would be paid by the State and Rs. 9 lakhs by the Government of India during the emergency period. Out of this sum, Your

Highness will have to make allotment to Her Highness and the Yuvraj. The latter's expenses would, of course, be larger than before on account of his being Regent. I hope Your Highness will agree to make a suitable allowance for him, bearing in mind his needs. I should be glad to know your suggestion in this respect. Similarly, I should welcome Your Highness's proposal regarding Her Highness's allowance. As regards Hazur Departments, Sheikh Sahib has already agreed to our suggestion that an allowance of Rs. 5 lakhs should be made to Your Highness for this purpose. A list of items which will be controlled by Your Highness, and during your absence, by the Yuvraj as Regent, has been furnished to Sheikh Sahib, and he has promised to let us have his comments as soon as possible. After his comments are received, we shall finalise the whole matter, but in the meantime, Your Highness can make suitable allocation to major and other heads of expenditure on State Departments from out of the allotment of Rs. 5 lakhs.

With kind regards,

Yours sincerely,
VALLABBHAI PATEL

These letters show significantly his worry for his son's safety and security. After all, he was born to his wife after great longing not only by him but by the people of the State. Later, Maharaja Hari Singh, and the whole family went to Dehradun on the suggestion of Sardar Patel. The Kashmir affairs were being handled by Nehru himself. "Although he (Patel) never criticised Jawaharlal in my presence, it was clear from his conversation that he did not approve of his special relationship with Sheikh Abdullah, whom he evidently distrusted and disliked", writes Dr. Karan Singh. He further writes in his *Autobiography* : "My father made no secret of his unhappiness at the whole situation, and although he had bowed to the inevitable, I realised that our relationship had been soured in the process. My mother was also breaking away on her own, which added a new emotional instability to the entire situation... 20th June, 1949, according to Dr. Karan Singh, was an important landmark in his life. Maharaja

Hari Singh, his staff and servants left by train early in the morning for Bombay. Maharani Tara Devi, Nachint Chand and maid servants left by car for Kasauli." She could not, as she said, tolerate the heat of Bombay. Karan Singh left for Srinagar. Maharaja Hari Singh had signed on that morning before he left for Bombay, a short proclamation :

PROCLAMATION

Whereas I have decided for reasons of health to leave the State for a temporary period and to entrust to the Yuvraj Shri Karan Singh Ji Bahadur for that period all my powers and functions in regard to the Government of the State.

Now, therefore, I hereby direct and declare that all powers and functions, whether legislative, executive or judicial which are exercisable by me in relation to the State and its Government, including in particular my right and prerogative of making laws, of issuing proclamations, orders and pardoning offenders, shall, during the period of my absence from the State, be exercisable by the Yuvraj Shri Karan Singh Ji Bahadur.

HARI SINGH
Maharajadhiraj

Maharaja Hari Singh felt that even if Karan Singh went to the State as a Regent, he would be thrown out in disgrace by Sheikh Mohammad Abdullah within a few months.

Now, Maharaja Hari Singh was bound to become crestfallen and frustated. It was not only that he had lost his kingdom, but for all practical purposes, there was dismembership of his family. When he needed most the company of his lovely wife, she had preferred her brother's company to his and gone to Kasauli on the pretext of intolerable heat of Bombay. Then, she never suggested to him that he could also come along with her to Kasauli, though he would not have agreed. Yuvraj paid visits to him off and on at Bombay, but he could not stay with him for quite a long time. Maharaja Hari Singh was of a secluded disposition and the Maharani could not sit in the confines of the Bombay apartment; she liked company of her relatives on the

parental side. Earlier, she complained to Yuvraj, “Your father never meets the people, that is the trouble. He just sits surrounded by fawning courtiers and favourites, and never really gets to know what is going on outside.”

‘Happiness is an episode in the general drama of pain’ and Hari Singh did have some occasions even now when he spent his time with his lovely wife and his dear son whom he in the heart of hearts loved but was not demonstrative. One such occasion was the wedding of Yuvraj. Maharaja Hari Singh had a feudal trait changing engagements of his son every now and then. When Yuvraj was only ten years old, he thought of getting him engaged to Susan, the daughter of the then ruler of Jodhpur, Maharaja Umed Singh, who was Hari Singh’s friend. Then, somehow, the friendship broke and with it the thought of engagement of Yuvraj with his daughter. Then, he made haste to get him a Ratlam princess, the daughter of the ruler of Ratlam and this was a formal and ceremonious betrothal of the Yuvraj. The Ratlam princess, Chandar Kumari, called “Shanti”, along with her younger brother and others, came to Srinagar and spent some months there, but in 1949, Maharaja Hari Singh impulsively broke off this engagement also.

Now, the idea of marrying his son to a Nepalese princess struck to Maharaja Hari Singh. It so happened that at a wedding in Delhi between the Raja of Khetri and Princess Bhuvan, daughter of the Nepalese Ambassador, General Singha, who was the younger brother of Prime Minister Maharaja Mohan Shamsher, met General Sarada, his elder son, his wife and children. The eldest daughter was the girl Yasho Rajaya Lakshami, then twelve years of age. It was actually at the instance of Sardar Patel that the matrimonial alliance between the two ruling families of Kashmir and Nepal was made. Patel thought that this will be of political importance to India. It may be mentioned that General Sarada Shamsher had come to India commanding a military contingent sent by Rana, Prime Minister of Nepal Maharaja Mohan Shamsher as a gesture of friendship for India. Then, a meeting was arranged at Delhi between the two families at a lunch at Faridkot House. After lunch, when they got in the car,

the Yuvraj gave his assent. Yuvraj Karan Singh also realised that actually it was Patel who was instrumental in arranging the marriage which was celebrated with full gaiety and in Hindu traditional manner on 5th March 1950. Maharaja Hari Singh was in a triumphant joy and took keen interest in the arrangements. He had thoroughly framed the details of the various functions, but he restricted the invitees to close relatives only. After the wedding, the Yuvraj, accompanied by his bride, left Bombay on 26th April.

Now, Sheikh Abdullah was eager to make himself popular with the people and make some revolutionary announcements. He sent two proposals to Yuvraj Karan Singh for his signature. These were regarding abolition of jagirdhari (the feudal land-grant system) and landlordism without any compensation at all. Before signing, the Yuvraj referred the matter to the Government of India. They did not approve it on the plea that there was no properly functioning legislature at present. Sheikh Abdullah did not care for the approval and announced the measure in a public meeting at Lal Chowk. Then Abdullah planned a strategy of formal abolition of the ruling dynasty. The mechanism he chose was the idea of a Constitutional Assembly for the State, but this could not be done without the consent of the Government of India. For Government of India, it provided a way to make the question of plebiscite redundant in spite of the fact that Nehru had, on many occasions, reassured to U.N.O. and Pakistan that India did not back out of the earlier commitments. But India thought that the Constitutional Assembly would confirm the State's accession to India. For Sheikh Abdullah, it would provide an opportunity to do away with the Dogra ruling dynasty. It was incumbent on Government of India to seek the co-operation of the Maharaja in asking Yuvraj to make the proclamation to this effect. Maharaja Hari Singh wrote to Yuvraj not to sign the proclamation. But ultimately, the Maharaja was persuaded to lift the ban and leave the matter to the discretion of Yuvraj Karan Singh. Thus, he was compelled by circumstances to issue proclamation for the establishment of Constitutional Assembly.

On 5th November, 1951, the Jammu and Kashmir

Constitutional Assembly met. Earlier, the elections were held, but the opposition group, the Praja Parishad in Jammu boycotted the elections. Consequently, 72 out of 75 members were elected unopposed. Yuvraj Karan Singh did not attend the opening session.

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Abolition of Dogra Dynasty Rule

In his pompous speech in the Assembly, Sheikh Abdullah declared that the Assembly would proclaim 'reasoned conclusion regarding accession and discuss the land reforms'. He also said that another issue of vital import to the nation involves the future of the royal family. He further said :

“After the attainment of complete power by the people, it would have been appropriate gesture of goodwill to recognise Maharaja Hari Singh as the first constitutional Head of the State. But I must say with regret that he has completely forfeited the confidence of every section of the people. His incapacity to adjust himself to changed conditions and his antiquated views on vital problems constituted positive disqualification for him to hold the high office of a democratic Head of the State.”¹

In the next paragraph, he strongly advocated Yuvraj Karan Singh being chosen as the first Head of the State. Praising him, he said “I and my colleagues in the Government have been impressed by his intelligence, his broad outlook and his keen desire to serve the country, The qualities of the Yuvraj single out as a fit choice for the honour of being chosen the first Head of the State.”

Karan Singh on the Horns of a Dilemma

Yuvraj Karan Singh's mind was at this time virtually on the horns of a dilemma like Arjuna of Mahabharata. Several forces were arrayed against him, some sincere and devoted to his father, kith and kin and Dogras who were against accepting the post. Then, there were adversaries like Sheikh Abdullah and his followers. Maharaja Hari Singh was justified in being furious at the way he had been humiliated and turned out unceremoniously from his home and hearth. He had very hesitatingly accepted Yuvraj's appointment as Regent and now the idea that he would take over as Sadar-e-Riyasat after his dynastic rule had been ruthlessly abolished in absentia was galling and frustrating. Many Dogras looked upon it as a traitorous act and that treachery is worse than killing. Some Dogras pointed out that if he accepted the office, it would tantamount to selling the Dogras out to the Kashmiris; that he would go down in history as a traitor to the dynasty founded by Maharaja Gulab Singh, that if he defied his father, he might well be disinherited and lose his patrimony worth many crores of rupees. Sheikh Abdullah's followers were triumphant.

Thus, like Arjuna, Yuvraj was confused. Was it not, he thought, some sort of a trap prepared by Abdullah to humiliate him and on some pretext, shoe him out of the State, as he had 'pathological hatred' for his family. Sheikh had forced the Government of India to rule out step by step all the commitments made to his father, even to the Government of India itself. Then should he, instead of standing on his feet, lay down his arms and escape to Bombay and live there sadly and sulking all his life! Then he began to ponder over the whole affair point by point. If he declined the offer, then Sheikh would elect someone else. It was already rumoured that Masha Nihar Singh, a Harijan member from Jammu would be elected. His leaving the State—for the Sheikh would not tolerate his presence—would mean to cut all his ties of his family and Sheikh would sooner or later take possession of all their family property and lands, as also the religious and family Trusts set by his ancestors.

Besides, he thought that "by his staying in his capacity as Sadar-e-Riyasat, he could play a useful role in safeguarding the

national interest. When he met Nehru in August, he noticed a slight hint of displeasure in Jawaharlal's remarks about Sheikh Abdullah and "gathered the distinct impression that he wanted me to be on the scene so that I could be of help if some difficulty arose in future." He also consulted Jammu leaders, including the President of the Praja Parishad, Pandit Prem Nath Dogra. They were opposed to his occupying the post, but after a few days' discussion, he was able to convince them the wisdom of taking the plunge.

Before taking the final plunge, he paid a visit to Delhi and called on Nehru, who "repeated some of the perplexity he was beginning to feel in dealing with Sheikh Abdullah and said that this made it all the more important that I should be on the scene to be able to help if some problems arose in the future." This convinced Yuvraj Karan Singh. He was a great devotee of Lord Krishna and had seen him twice in his dreams Autography and may be he remembered at that time :

"He whose mind is not perturbed by adversity, who does not crave for happiness, who is free from fondness, fear and anger, is the Muni of constant wisdom."

(Ch. II, 56) Bhagvadgita

After the meeting with Nehru, he took the decision. Thus, his links with the feudal system were cut off. Maharaja Hari Singh was angry and could not forgive him for accepting the office. Even his own community, the Dogras, would be hostile at least for some time. The die was cast and on 17th November, 1952 he took the oath of office from the Chief Justice, Janki Nath Wazir. Dr. Karan Singh read a short speech and in its first paragraph he said : "I am aware that the function of the Head of a State are, as a focus of unity, both important and onerous. This is particularly in a State where conditions have been abnormal as they have been here. I must admit that I had some hesitation in taking upon myself the responsibilities which this position entails. Knowing as I did that there must be many better fitted men than myself in ability and experience to fill this office. But the trust and confidence which has now been placed in me has given me hope and courage to assume these new responsibilities, and I can assure

you that whatever talent and capacity I might possess, will be entirely at the service of the State and its people.”³

As the later events in the State showed, he was the best fitted person. He is surely a naturally gifted man. He did the bold and wise thing that he accepted in the teeth of opposition from his father whom he loved intensely, otherwise there was every possibility of the State being disintegrated or at worst Kashmir becoming a Sultanate. In due course, the Dogras appreciated the superb tact and agility to walk on the razor-edge of Kashmir's politics. He mollified his father's anger and his feelings towards him became sweeter, though he never gave expression to his thoughts, when in 1953, he, his son, dismissed and arrested Sheikh Abdullah. Sheikh Abdullah fell headlong from power and was not able to recover it so fully, a victim of his own defects.

After Maharaja Hari Singh left the State, Sheikh Abdullah turned his attention to India. He pressed the Union Government to accord a special status to Kashmir. The reasons given were that a war was raging within the State, a part of the State was in possession of Pakistan and the conditions of life in Kashmir were not normal. India readily agreed to add a new clause—306 A—which finally became the famous Article 370 of the Union Constitution.

A draft of Clause 306 A gave Indian Parliament the power to legislate on the three acceded branches of Government—Foreign Affairs, Defence and Communication. Naturally, on the day of the commencement of the Union Constitution on 26th January, 1950, the President issued an order under Article 370 that dealing with 35 entries in the Union List of seventh Schedule to the Order would correspond to the three matters—External Affairs, Defence and Communications—specified in the Instrument of Accession of State of Jammu and Kashmir to India. The order laid down that the Union Parliament would have no power to legislate on any other matter allocated to the Union or the State.

The jurisdiction of the Supreme Court in Civil and Criminal Cases relating to Kashmir was barred. The Election Commission's jurisdiction was confined to the election of the members of Parliament and to the offices of the President and the Vice-

President. The Comptroller and Auditor-General of India had no power over the accounts of Jammu and Kashmir State. The State could have its separate flag, the Chief Minister would be called Prime Minister. For all practical purposes, the Jammu and Kashmir State was a republic within a republic with its separate President, separate Prime Minister, Separate Constitution and separate flag.

Praja Parishad Movement and Somersault of Sheikh Moh'd Abdullah

Maharaja Hari Singh didn't express his feelings about anything regarding Kashmir. The Maharaja's accession should have elicited gratitude in the country; instead he was vilified and traduced.

Praja Parishad launched a widespread agitation under their veteran leader Pt. Prem Nath Dogra against Sheikh Abdullah. They wanted full integration with India. Their rallying cry was 'Ek Vidhan, Ek Nishan, Ek Pradhan, i.e., one constitution, one flag and one president.

Mass arrests were made and in May, 1953, the President of the Jana Sangh, Dr. Shyama Prasad Mukherjee, travelled to Jammu without getting the necessary permit when he was arrested and detained in jail in Srinagar. The following month, his death there from heart attack, as some called in mysterious circumstances, raised a storm of indignation in India against the regime of Sheikh Abdullah.

In Ladakh also, there was discontentment. Kushale Bakula, the Head Lama, voiced the feelings of Ladakh and declared that they would like to merge with the Indian Union.

Around 1951, the unchallenged power to Sheikh Abdullah had plainly infected his thinking and Judgement. Even then, his mind was moving towards independence for the Valley, with himself as the Kashmir's equivalent of the Great Mughal. He had become belligerent. Sheikh Abdullah's despotic attitude made him to lose his popularity. He wanted to regain it and began to show his disinclination towards the accession to India. "This was obviously meant to pave the way for founding a "Sheikhdom in Kashmir under the protecting wing of the U.N.O."⁴ says Bamzai in (Kashmir and Power Politics, p. 205).

He had become irritable in so much so that some students in the local college at Jammu objected the hoisting of the National Conference flag which led to a disturbance. The Government arrested some Praja Parishad leaders who had taken no part in the demonstration. Sheikh Abdullah released them when instructed by the Indian States Minister, N. Gopaldaswami Aiyangar. This was considered as an interference in the internal matters of the State and he made a speech at R.S. Pura on August 10, 1952 in which he charged India of communalism and said that the Indian Constitution cannot be applied to Kashmir. He and his colleague M.A. Beg had been giving speeches and emphasising the separation between Kashmir and India. Commenting on the changed attitude of the Sheikh, the London Times wrote on May 8, 1952 :

“Sheikh made it clear that he is much opposed to the domination of India as to subjugation by Pakistan. He claims sovereign authority for the Kashmir Constitutional Assembly without limitations by the Constitution of the Indian Union.”⁵ It further said, “This stand has a strong appeal to Kashmiris on both sides of the cease-fire line and if this movement of purely Kashmiri nationalism were to gain ground, it might well oblige India, Pakistan and the United Nations to modify their views about what ought to be done next.” In this vicious atmosphere, the session of the Constitution Assembly was held at Jammu in 1952. Mirza Afzal Beg stated that the Basic Principles Committee, set up in the previous session, was of the opinion that the State should be a Republic, within the Republic of India. The Assembly adopted the principle of abolition of monarchy and having an elected Head of the State.

Delhi Agreement⁶

This constitutional crises finally was sought to be solved by mutual negotiations between the Central and State Governments. This was decided upon by what is known as “the Delhi Agreement”, announced on July 24, 1952. It was agreed by India that Kashmir would be given special status in the Constitution whereby the State would get complete internal autonomy. The hereditary monarchy would be abolished and Head of the State would be

elected for five years. The jurisdiction of the Supreme Court would be limited in the case of Kashmir regarding inter State disputes, fundamental rights and to matters of defence, foreign affairs and communication. The emergency powers of the President of India would apply to Kashmir only at the request or with the concurrence of the Government of the State. The national flag of India was to be supreme.

“Sheikh Abdullah⁷ immediately gave effect to the provisions of the agreement concerning the replacement of the Maharaja’s rule by the Head of the State termed Sadar-e-Riyasat. Two days later, Yuvraj Karan Singh, who was only 21 years old, was elected and formally recognised by the President of India. This was the end of the hereditary rule of the Dogra dynasty.

In May, 1953, Adlai Stevenson came to Kashmir. He had a meeting with Sheikh Moh’d Abdullah in Srinagar from May 1 to May 3. He excluded from the last meeting even his trusted and close lieutenants. Later, in August, writing about Stevenson’s meeting with Sheikh, the *Manchester Guardian* disclosed that “he seemed to have listened to suggestions that the best status for Kashmir would be independence from India and Pakistan. Joseph Korb, in his book : ‘Danger in Kashmir’ (p.237) writes of this incident : “there were highly inflammatory rumours that the United States was backing the idea of Kashmir’s independence and that Sheikh Abdullah had been encouraged in it when Adlai Stevenson had visited Srinagar in May. Later also, he declared in his speeches that “it was not necessary that our State should become an appendage of either India or Pakistan.” On July 12, *The New York Times* wrote, “both the nations have been on the verge of agreement before that, this time many observers believe it will actually come off.”

Earlier, in June, 1952, Sheikh Abdullah went to Paris where he met several representatives of the Western countries. The Political Correspondent of the *Hindustan Times* revealed this later when Vijay Kumar wrote : “That the direct contact between Sheikh Abdullah and the United Nations authorities was established first in New York (where he went early in 1950) and for the second time at Paris. On these occasions, he was presented with

the idea of the Valley of Kashmir being made independent under the U.N. auspices. U.N. observers were chosen with an eye to supervising and mapping out the country. A contact with Sheikh Abdullah was maintained through a small group, one of whom said to be Mr. Ashai, Registrar of the Kashmir University, who used to call at the place of missionary teacher, Dr. Phil Esmonds. He passed on Sheikh Abdullah's reactions to the United Nations representatives at regular church services."

Soon after Stevenson-Abdullah meeting, the latter gave his colleagues a complete surprise when he repudiated the State's accession to India. He placed before the Working Committee of National Conference the plan of "Independent Kashmir" and asked his colleagues to accept it. But it was overwhelmingly defeated in the Working Committee. But there was an open rift in the cabinet. The matter came to open surface when Sheikh Abdullah asked Sham Lal Saraf, the Development Minister to resign who refused to do so. Finally, on August 7, the three members of the cabinet led by Bakshi Ghulam Mohammad accused Abdullah in a memorandum of making arbitrary decisions, of being responsible for deterioration in the administration, despotism, inefficiency and wanton wastage of public resources. The memorandum informed Sheikh Abdullah that cabinet had lost the confidence of the people. Only Afzal Beg was on Sheikh's side. A copy of the memorandum was submitted to Sadar-e-Riyasat, Yuvraj Karan Singh, who called for an emergency meeting wherein the differences would be sought out and solution found out. Sheikh Abdullah refused to attend and on the afternoon of August 8, left on a weekend holiday to Gulmarg.

Meanwhile, the Sadar-e-Riyasat, faced with the serious situation, acted immediately and issued an order on August 8, 1953, dismissing Sheikh Moh'd Abdullah and dissolving the Council of Ministers headed by him.⁸ On August 9, he invited Bakshi Ghulam Mohammad to form a new Government which will have to secure a vote of confidence from the Legislative Assembly during the coming session*.

* This details of the dismissal of Sheikh Abdullah is given by Bamzai in his book. "Kashmir and Power Politics" pp. 212-213.

Bakshi Gulam Mohammad accepted the invitation and was sworn in on the same day as the Prime Minister. On August 9, Sheikh Abdullah, along with some of his confidants, was arrested at Gulmarg and kept in detention at Udhampur in the Jammu Province. Sadar-e-Riyasat, Yuvraj Karan Singh was hesitant in arresting Sheikh but Bakshi clearly said that he could not run the Government if Sheikh and Beg were left free. Then Yuvraj summoned his political advisors, including D.P. Dhar and Brigadier B.M. Kaul. An order of Sheikh's dismissal was drafted. Along with this, he wrote a covering letter to Sheikh Abdullah. The last two paragraphs of the letter are :

“Under these conditions, I as Head of the State, have been forced to the conclusion that the present cabinet cannot continue in office any longer and hence I regret to inform you that I have dissolved the Council of Ministers selected by you. A copy of my order in this connection is attached herewith.

I need hardly add how deeply distressed I am at having to take this action, but the vital interests of the State, which is my duty to safeguard, leaves me no alternative. I trust that this will in no way affect the mutual older and cordial feelings we have for each other.”

ORDER

Whereas, for some months, I have been noticing with growing concern that there have existed acute differences of opinion between the members of the Government on basic issues—political, economic and administrative—affecting the vital interests of the State;

And, whereas, members of the Government have been publicly expressing sharply conflicting points of view regarding these matters and whereas on these fundamental issues, the views of a majority of the members of the cabinet are sharply opposed to the view held by the Prime Minister and one of his colleagues;

And, whereas, efforts to work in harmony and pull together as a team having failed, and the majority in the cabinet has

expressed that, lacking as it does in unity of purpose and action, the present Cabinet has lost the confidence of the people;

And, whereas, the economic distress of the people has considerably increased which needs prompt and serious attention;

And, whereas, finally, the functioning of the present cabinet on the basis of joint responsibility has become impossible and the resultant conflicts have greatly jeopardised the unity, prosperity and stability of the State;

I, Karan Singh, Sadar-e-Riyasat, functioning in the interests of the people of the State who have reposed the responsibility and authority of the Headship of the State in me, do hereby dismiss Sheikh Moh'd Abdullah from the Prime Ministership of the State of the Jammu and Kashmir, and consequently the Council of Ministers headed by him is dissolved herewith.

Srinagar
August 8, 1953

Sadar-e-Riyasat
Jammu and Kashmir

In the early hours of 9th August, Yuvraj Karan Singh administered the oath of office to Bakshi Ghulam Mohammad and G.L. Dogra and Finance Minister so that they could effectively deal with the critical situation.

Time brings some awkward revenges. It was Dr. Karan Singh, son of Maharaja Hari Singh, who took the bottom out of the pedestal on which Sheikh was standing.

In the meanwhile, at the instance of Jawaharlal Nehru, Bakshi Ghulam Moh'd released Abdullah in 1958. After his release, he started a campaign against Bakshi's National Conference and it appeared that he would use Plebiscite Front, earlier established by Mirzā Afzal Beg, his loyal lieutenant, as a means of getting back to power. Plebiscite Front was definitely an anti-India organisation and Sheikh's release gave it strength. In all the mosques, the feelings against India were roused and Sheikh Abdullah toured the Valley and spread hatred against India. His activities were getting dangerous for India and he was again imprisoned under the Preventive Detention Act on 29th April.

Then, it was decided, after legal consultation, to prosecute him for receiving illegal aid from Pakistan for anti-national activities. This was known as Kashmir Conspiracy case and it continued till it was withdrawn for political reasons. There was sufficient evidence that plebiscite front had been receiving large sums of money from Pakistan and it was later corroborated by Zulfikar Ali Bhutto in his memoirs.

In the meantime, Maharaja Hari Singh passed away and the Government of India issued a notification which reads as follows :

ORDER

“In pursuance of clause 22 of Article 366 of the Constitution of India, the President is hereby pleased to recognise Yuvraj Karan Singh as successor to his late His Highness Hari Singh Inder Mahinder Bahadur with effect from 26th April, 1961.

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Fight Against Aggression

Despite Lord Mountbatten's unwillingness to send Indian forces to Kashmir, throughout the night, preparations were made to send by air a small contingent of troops on the morning of October 27, 1947.

When the first batch under the command of Lt. Colonel D.R. Rai flew to Srinagar, it was not known whether Srinagar and its airport were safe. The threat to Srinagar was very real. Without waiting for the raiders to advance, Indian troops marched forward and met with a reverse near Baramulla. The raiders were ten times in number as the Indian forces. Therefore, Col. Rai decided to withdraw to Pattan, half-way between Baramulla and Srinagar. "The last party of Indian troops", says Bamzai, "had to run the gauntlet of heavy fire. Many fell dead, and among them was Col. Rai himself—the victim of a sniper's bullet. But he had staggered the enemy, disintegrated his columns and halted his advance long enough for reinforcement to arrive from India. By his courage and dash, vital progress to save Srinagar was achieved."¹

At Badgam, nine miles south-east of Srinagar, there was a four hour battle between the Indian troops and the raiders. On November 3, a company of the First Kumaon Regiment met the

enemy force, 500 to 700 strong, hardly half a mile from the air-field. In the encounter, Major Somnath Sharma, who commanded the company of Indian force, inflicted heavy casualties on the enemy. But before the reinforcement could reach the Kumaonis, Maj. Sharma was killed when a two-inch mortar bomb exploded near him. Meanwhile, Brigadier Lt. Sen, who arrived in Srinagar, took command of all Indian and State Forces in the Srinagar Valley.

Reinforcement continued to come along the newly built road from Pathankot to Jammu, and thence through the Banihal Pass. When it was found that the raiders could bypass the Indian position at Pattan, 17 miles from Srinagar, Brigadier Sen withdrew to a point 4½ miles due west of Srinagar city. Brigadier Sen found the enemy concentration near the village called Shalteng. He entrapped the enemy from three sides². The Indian Air Force fighters gave close support from the air and strafed the enemy at Shalteng and the battle lasted for 12 hours. The enemy was surprised by armoured cars which made them flee halter-skelter, leaving behind 300 dead. The decisive role was played by the Indian Air Force in this crucial engagement.

It was a decisive victory which removed the threat to Srinagar and utterly demoralised the enemy. This major offensive was undertaken on November 7, 1947 and the next day Baramulla was captured by Indian forces and the raiders were in retreat. Uri was captured by our forces about a week later. With the liquidation of the pockets of raiders in the Valley, Srinagar became quite safe.

When the Indian forces entered the town of Baramulla, they found it in a shambles, its houses and shops, including the Mission Hospital, destroyed by arson and wanton violence. There was hardly any sign of life "except a cocker-spaniel lamenting the death of its mistress the Mother Superior of the Christian Convent."³ All the citizens had fled for their lives to the other side of Jhelum. The few who had offered resistance were fired upon. A National Conference worker, Maqbul Sherwani, had been nailed to a pole and shot. According to a report by an American photo journalist, Margaret Bourke-White : "He—Mr. Maqbul

Sherwani—must have been a sort of Robinhood character. From the stories the townspeople told me, championing the peasants who could not pay their exorbitant taxes, pitching into the police when he found them beating some luckless victim, bolstering up the resistance of the people against their many oppressions, etc., were his actions.

“When the tribesmen invaded Kashmir and terrorised the countryside Sherwani, who knew every foothold in the Valley, began working behind the lines, keeping up the morale of the besieged villagers, urging them to resist and stick together regardless of whether they were Hindus, Sikhs or Muslims, assuring them that help from the Indian Army and People’s Militia was on the way. Three times he skilfully planted rumours, and decoyed hands of tribesmen and got them surrounded and captured by the Indian infantry. But the fourth time he was captured and killed.”

The Loss of Gilgit

“When the news of tribal raid on the Valley reached Gilgit, the Muslim soldiers deserted and on the night of October 31, 1947, 100 Gilgit Scouts led by Major Brown, Lt. Haider Khan and Subedar-Major Babar Khan surrounded the house of Brigadier Ghansara Singh, the Governor of Gilgit and asked him to surrender. It was on November 1, 1947, that the Governor was put under arrest and a Provisional Government was set up at Gilgit. After a fortnight of Governor’s arrest, one Sardar Moh’d Alam Khan, a Pathan, reached from Peshawar and took over as the Political Agent there. The Hindus were massacred or converted to Islam. Gilgit thus passed into the hands of Pakistan.

“In the western part of Jammu Province, there was a serious deterioration in the military situation. In the Mirpur district, since the arrival of Indian troops, the town of Mirpur, the town of Bhimber, the town of Rajouri and the whole area adjoining Chamb and Naushera, Jhangar, a key place both to Mirpur and Kothi, was also lost”⁴, writes Jain in “Kashmir” published in “*Imprint*” dt. August 1985.

On the Kathua-Sialkot side, there were border raids, regular

and intense, from the Pakistan side. The people on our side were plundered and killed and women raped. All the border villages were vacated and some 70,000 to 80,000 refugees ran to take shelter in the city of Jammu.

Maharaja Hari Singh's anguish and dejection was great and he wrote a long letter of complaint to Sardar Patel giving vent to his agony.

The Maharaja's Complaint⁵

According to the published *Correspondence of Sardar Patel, Vol. I*, the Maharaja wrote to Sardar Patel on 31 January, 1948 thus :

“The military situation, as you know, has been quite depressing since the arrival of the Indian troops. Except the first gains in the Kashmir Valley, there has been a debit balance throughout as far as achievements are concerned.

“The Indian troops arrived in the Valley on 27th October. At that time we were in possession of about 3/4th of Poonch and the whole of Mirpur district. We had, by then, lost only small bits of Poonch and Muzafferabad district. After the recapture of Baramulla and Uri, there has been a standstill at Uri. Two months have passed and the Indian troops are still at Uri. They attempted a venture to the town of Poonch and though they reached, it was at a great cost and the road was eventually lost. In the Poonch *Jagir* which was held by the State troops inch by inch, we had to withdraw and eventually lost the whole of the *Jagir* except the town itself, where about 40,000 are besieged along with 4 battalions (3 State and 1 Indian). The situation is by no means satisfactory. I may mention that in the August disturbances, with two battalions of the troops, we cleared the whole of Poonch *Jagir*, peace was restored, the whole of the revenue was realised and the administration was functioning normally. It was only in the second week of October that trouble again began in Poonch and our troops resisted it till about the end of December. But as no help was given, they had eventually to fall back on Poonch town...”

“In Mirpur district, at the time when the Indian forces arrived, we were still holding Mangla and our territory along the Jhelum

Canal bank, but during the last two months, we lost Mangla, Alibeg, Gurdwara and the town of Mirpur, the town of Bhimber and the villages of Deva and Battala, the town of Rajouri and the whole of the area adjoining Chamb and Naoshera. Jhangar, a key-place both for Mirpur and Kotli, was lost after a defeat. These defeats have been a heavy blow to us and undermined the prestige of the Indian forces. Not a single town has so far been recovered by the Indian troops. The people judge an army from results by the Indian troops and not propaganda carried on about it. On the Kathua-Sialkot border, attacks have intensified. Every day, there is one raid or another. A number of villages have been burnt, people have been looted, women abducted and there have been killings also. The result has been that all the border villages have been vacated and we have about 70,000 to 80,000 refugees in the city of Jammu. Crops, houses and valuables have been lost. Most of the people are also vacating Jammu and its suburbs and going to West Punjab. The situation, therefore, is worsening every day.

“The name of the Indian Army is getting into the mud in spite of its brilliant record. I was a member of the War Cabinet. I travelled in war zones during the Great War. The name of the Indian Army was at its highest pitch and it pains me to see that the name of the Indian Army has become a topic of every tongue these days and it is daily losing prestige. Some people think that it is not the fault of the Army but the fault of the policy that is being followed; others feel that it is the fault of the commanders who are quite new to the job. People who would have had to wait for 10 or 15 years to become generals have been put in charge of operations. Opinions differ, but the fact is that the name of the Army is in the mud. Sardar Baldev Singh was here for a day. He has heard from our politicians, members of the public and from me and my Prime Minister all that everyone had to say. He told me secretly that he had ordered certain actions to be taken. I told him that a mere order is nothing unless it is implemented. When you kindly spent two days with us here, a number of decisions were taken and you gave instructions in certain matters. Since your departure, nothing has been done and, as I have said, we had more serious attacks. The effort on the

part of Pakistan is gaining ground every day. Their morale owing to success is going up. They loot property, they take away cattle and women and when they go back to Pakistan, they incite people and tell them how much loot and what benefits there are to raid our territory. On the other hand, our morale is rapidly going down. So far as the people are concerned, they are thoroughly demoralised and they start fleeing as soon as there is even a rumour of a raid. Even people at distant places start fleeing when they see a fire five or six miles from their villages. So far as the Indian forces are concerned, they do not leave their apportioned places to meet the raiders. There are no mobile columns to meet them. The work is left to a few home guards or to a platoon or of very tired State forces. How can it be possible for them to engage 500 to 1,000 raiders? Last time you ordered guerillas to come into the State and take over the work. As far as I know, no guerillas have arrived so far...

“In the situation, therefore, my position as Ruler has become very anomalous and one of great perplexity. People in the State continue sending me telegrams and asking for help. Our civil administration is now in the hands of the National Conference and military operations in the hands of the Indian Union. I have no voice or power either on the civil or military side. The Indian forces are under the Indian Commander. The result, therefore, is that I have just to watch the terrible situation in a helpless manner, to look on at the abduction of women, killing and loss of my people, without power to give them any redress whatever. People continue to approach me every day and they still think that it lies in my power to give them relief and redress. You will realise that my position is getting most awkward every day so long as the military situation is adverse to us and refugees continue pouring into the city and daily raids from Pakistan keep on coming without any reply from us.

“Apart from the military situation, the reference to the UNO and the proceedings that are hanging fire there, are causing great uncertainty and perplexity not only to me but to every Hindu and Sikh in the State as well as to those who belong to the National Conference. The feeling is strongly gaining ground that the UN

Security Council will take an adverse decision and that the State will eventually have to accede to Pakistan as a result of what the Security Council will decide. The Hindus and Sikhs have, therefore, started going away from the State, as they anticipate that the result of the UNO decision will be the same as what happened in West Punjab and, therefore, it is much better to clear out of the State before that eventuality arises. The National Conference leaders also feel that they may eventually be let down by accepting the decision of the Security Council and that would be disastrous for them.

“My position in this matter is also precarious. You know I definitely acceded to the Indian Union with the idea that the Union will not let us down and the State would remain acceded to the Union and my position and that of my dynasty would remain secure. It was for this reason that I accepted the advice of the Indian Union in the matter of internal administration. If we have to go to Pakistan, it was wholly unnecessary to accede to India or to mould the internal administration according to the desire of the Indian Union. I feel that the internal administration or the question of accession is wholly foreign to the jurisdiction of the Security Council, but internal questions of the formation of Interim Government and the matter of accession have all been taken notice by them. It was a wrong step in going to the Security Council and then agreeing to the enlargement of the agenda before that Council. As soon as the Council enlarged the agenda, the Indian Union should have withdrawn the reference and ended the matter.

“In the situation described above, a feeling comes to my mind as to the possible steps that I may take to make, so far as I am concerned, a clean slate of the situation. Sometimes I feel that I should withdraw the accession that I have made to the Indian Union. The Union provisionally accepted the accession and if the Union cannot recover back our territory and is going eventually to agree to the decision of the Security Council which may result in handing us over to Pakistan, then there is no point in sticking to the accession of the State to the Indian Union. For the time being, it may be possible to have better terms from Pakistan, but that is immaterial, because eventually, it would mean an end of

the dynasty and end of the Hindus and Sikhs in the State. There is no alternative possible for me and that is to withdraw the accession and that may kill the reference to the UNO, because the Indian Union will have no right to continue the proceedings before the Council if the accession is withdrawn. The result may be a return to the State held before the accession. The difficulty in that situation, however, will be that the Indian troops cannot be maintained in the State except as volunteers to help the State. I am prepared to lead my Army personally and to command, if the Indian Union agrees, also their troops. I know my country much better than any of your generals will know it even during the next several months or years and I am prepared to take the venture boldly rather than merely keep on sitting here doing nothing. It is for you to consider whether the Indian Union will accept this in both the situations, whether after the withdrawal of the accession or even if the accession continues. I am tired of my present life and it is much better to die fighting than watch helplessly the heart-breaking misery of my people.

“Another alternative that strikes me is that if I can do nothing, I should leave the State (short of abdication) and reside outside so that people do not think that I can do anything for them. For their grievances, they can hold the civil administration responsible or the Indian forces who are in charge of the defence of the State. The responsibility will then clearly be either of the Indian Union or of the administration of Sheikh Abdullah. If there is any criticism those responsible can have it and the responsibility for the suffering of the people will not be mine. Of course, I will anticipate that, as people started saying when I left Kashmir only on Mr. Menon’s advice that I had run away from Srinagar, they will say that I have left them in their hour of misery, but it is no use remaining in a position where one can do nothing merely to avoid criticism. Of course, if I go out of the State, I will have to take the public into confidence and tell them why I am going out.

The third alternative in the situation that has arisen is that the Indian Dominion discharges its duty on the military side effectively and makes an all-out effort to stop the raids from Pakistan and to drive out of the State not only the raiders but

also the rebels. It has avoided fighting so far. Two or three courageous battles will more or less end the situation, and, if it is delayed, there is bound to be a catastrophe. Pakistan is more organised against Kashmir than the Indian Dominion, and as soon as snow melts, it will start attacking Kashmir on all sides and the province of Ladakh will also come into the hands of the enemy and the Valley and the whole border will be raided and even double the number of troops at present in Jammu and Kashmir will not be able to save the situation. What should have been done or achieved a month before can still be achieved during the next month, but if the matters are delayed and if owing to the UNO reference and the attitude of compromise, the situation remains at a standstill, it would become terribly grave after the expiry of a month. Therefore, unless the Indian Union makes up its mind to fight fully and effectively, I may have to decide upon the two alternatives mentioned above...”

Sardar Patel's Reply : To this letter, Sardar Patel replied on February 9, 1948, and he said in the course of his reply, “but whatever the present situation may be a counsel of despair is out of place.” The Indian Army had to remain on the defensive during the winter in Kashmir. The enemy repeatedly tried to storm our pickets, but they were repulsed. Winter gave our commanders some respite to make plans and regroup. General Kalwant Singh, G.O.C. Jammu and Kashmir, had skilfully built up a fighting machine, even though he had to fight a well-prepared enemy. Srinagar was now safe and the trouble on the Pathankot-Jammu road had been completely removed.

Rajouri Offensive

To regain control over Rajouri was the first priority of the spring season. The advance of Rajouri started on April 8 after meticulous preparation on the ground and air planning. In the late evening of April 12, our forces entered Rajouri and the operation to Rajouri saved 1,200 to 1,500 refugees. “Of these”, writes Bamzai, “300 to 500 had been lined up to be shot when the Indian column arrived.” “The atrocities committed by the hostiles in Rajouri,” Bamzai further writes, “put Baramulla in shade. Our troops

expected a warm welcome from 5,000 refugees as well as local inhabitants. When they entered the town, they were appalled by an eerie silence. Before the hostiles departed, they had carried out a general massacre of the population. Heaps of rubble, mass graves and decomposed corpses told the tale. This was the second massacre Rajouri had witnessed. The first was witnessed when the raiders entered the town in the lush of victory.”

Recapture of Tithwal

Indian Forces, under the command of Brig. Harbux Singh, after covering 40 miles of difficult roadless country, entered Tithwal. In the battle, the enemy casualties were 67 dead. Thirty-five men, including Lt. Col. Sikandar Khan were taken as prisoners. On May 27, the Indian column advanced upto Urusa, overlooking Chakoti, the strong position of the raiders. Now, the Indian army was in a position to reach Domel and Muzaffarabad. The Pakistan Army batalions were sent to stem the tide of the Indian thrust westward. “Pakistan⁷ had so far denied their participation in Jammu & Kashmir fighting and it surprised the United Nations Commission when Pakistan confessed that since May Pakistan Army Batalions had been fighting in Kashmir”⁷, writes Bamzai.

In the meanwhile, at Jhangar in Jammu the Pakistan Army shelled the important post. On the night of July 3-4, the shelling was very intense and it killed Brigadier Usman, who was a fearless and popular man in the army. His body was flown to Delhi, where he was given a State funeral with full military honours. The Governor-General, the Prime Minister and other cabinet ministers attended the funeral.

The Cold Frontier Regions

The raiders planned to attack in the far off mountainous and bitter cold regions of Baltistan and Ladakh and conquering as much territory as possible in these areas. The raiders overpowered small State Force garrison at Kargil and then captured Dras. Their target was Ladakh and Leh, its capital.

Air Commodore Mehar Singh flew to Leh over the world's highest mountain ranges carrying Gen. Thimmayya. In May and

June, two companies of Gorkhas were flown to Leh by the I.A.F. More soldiers were needed and there being no safe road, they were carried by the Indian Dakotas. At the same time, the raiders came down from Gilgit into the Gurais Valley and approached Tragbal, overlooking Bandipur, 35 miles north of Srinagar.

Our army proceeded and captured a series of steep peaks and then advanced towards Gurais by June 28 and captured it. In the meantime, on August 14, the Skardu garrison was attacked and it had to surrender, being small in number compared to the raiders. Now, the pressure of raiders on Leh increased and companies of Gorkhas were flown to Leh.

Here, it may be mentioned that the Indian Army in the State was split into two divisions—Srinagar to operate under Major General Atma Singh. His charge extended over Kashmir to the south-west of the Pir Panjal range and Thimmayya's charge comprised the Kashmir Valley, Gilgit, Baltistan and Ladakh an area of 35,000 square miles of which about one-sixth lay in the Valley.⁸

Now, the immediate task was re-opening the road from Srinagar to Leh and to send relief to the Poonch garrison.

The Zojila Pass, 64 miles north-east of Srinagar, links Kashmir Valley with Ladakh. Indian troops controlled the Western approaches to the Zoji-la, but the raiders held the three ridges around the pass. The only alternative was to bring up tanks to this height from Jammu. But if tanks were to be brought, a road had to be constructed. Accordingly, in less than two months, the Thangraja road was constructed from Baltal to Zoji-la. On November 1, the tanks mounted on Zoji-la track and came to the Gumari basin. Then the tanks fired and destroyed 25 enemy bunkers and seized full control of Gumari. The infantry moved behind the tanks. They forced their way and wiping out all opposition, Indian forces reached Dras on November 15. The people of Dras welcomed the Indian force under Brig. H.L. Atal and informed that the hostiles had left out of Dras at 2 p.m. Then, Indian troops established positions at Kargil on November 23. The Indian troops started combing out the region for hostiles. Thus, the road link between Srinagar and Leh was established.

The Relief of Poonch

The progress of Indian forces was slowed down due to the rains. Soon after the raiders were thrown out of Thanamandi and Mendhar and Ramgarh palace. The defence of Poonch for over a year by the garrison units of the State forces is a story of great determination and courage. The garrison repulsed and threw back more than two hundred attacks. On the night of 19th November, Poonch garrison was liberated by the Indian forces under Gen. Atma Singh. While the operations against the Pakistan army was still going on, the Indian Army got strict orders from the Army headquarters to desist from further offensive operation.

Thus, it was aid from Pakistan that kept the Kashmir “war” going. The Government of India had only two alternatives if they were to expel the invaders from the Jammu & Kashmir soil which had become Indian territory, they must either carry the war into the enemy’s camp that is, Pakistan territory which is furnishing the raiders not only with men and material, but also with bases of operation or, they must dissuade Pakistan from giving aid to the raiders. Failing that, they must appeal to the U.N.O. to call upon Pakistan, a member State, to respect its international obligations and cease giving support to aggressors. The Indian Union chose the latter alternative and conducted negotiations with Pakistan. When they failed, the Indian Government appealed to the United Nations to put a stop to hostilities.

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India Approaches the United Nations Organisation

The great blunder by India was its decision to refer the Kashmir case to the United Nations Organisation. The record of the U.N.O. torn between power blocks, as it was, would have made any realistic person think a hundred times before putting his head in its noose. But Pandit Jawahar Lal Nehru, with his reputation for internationalisation and at the strong persuasion of Lord Mountbatten, rushed in where the wise fear to tread. That is what the Maharaja thought and felt angry.

He must have noted with anguish that the matter was first referred to the Security Council on January 1, 1948, when India invoking Article 35 of the Charter of the United Nations complained to the Council that Pakistan was engaged in aggression against India.

The Security Council considered the Kashmir problem in several of its meetings. In June, 1948, it appointed a Commission of four members and instructed it to visit India and Pakistan. The Commission could achieve nothing except order a cease-fire after the war had ravaged Kashmir for a year. In fact, Maharaja Hari Singh did not wish that the cease-fire order should be accepted

unless the whole of the State territory was cleared off the raiders.

Then, the United Nations appointed three successive mediators—Gen. MacNaughtan, Sir Owen Dixon and Dr. Frank Graham. Their efforts at mediation were a complete failure. Finally, the Prime Ministers of India and Pakistan conducted direct negotiations to resolve the deadlock.

Pakistan, in the meanwhile, entered into a military agreement with the United States, trying to bring military pressure upon India. Soon after, Pakistan joined the military alliances known as SEATO and the Bhagdad Pact. These alliances were used by Pakistan to carry a campaign of vilification of India with the aim of bringing political pressure on it. It is clear that it became impossible in this atmosphere of noxious propaganda, to consider the Kashmir problem. The basic question of Kashmir was thrown into background, in spite of debates and discussions for many years.

The working of the U.N.O. related below with some clear details, which must have distressed Maharaja Hari Singh. More galling must have been the inclusion of Sheikh Moh'd Abdullah in the Indian delegation where he spoke in February.

Thus, on first January, 1948, India lodged a complaint with the U.N.O. under article 35 of the United Nations Charter, which enables the Security Council to "investigate any dispute, or any situation which might lead to international friction". India made a simple request : "The Government of Pakistan be asked to prevent tribals and Pakistani nationals from taking part in the fighting in the State of Jammu and Kashmir and to deny to the raiders access to and use of the territory in operation against Kashmir, military and other supplies and all other kinds of aid that might try to prolong the fighting in Kashmir."¹

Mr. Gopalaswami Ayyangar, India's Minister without Portfolio was entrusted with the job of the presentation of India's case assisted by Sheikh Moh'd Abdullah and Mr. N.C. Setalwad. Mr. Ayyangar submitted his case on January 15, 1948. He narrated in detail how Pakistan had engineered communal disturbances in the border area and launched a massive invasion with the help of the tribesmen to overrun the State.² The Council was requested

(a) to prevent Pakistan military or civilian personnel and other Pakistani national to take part in the fighting in that State and deny the invaders access through Pakistan territory and to stop military and other supplies. The council was warned that if he did not take the necessary action, India would be justified in self-defence to enter Pakistani territory.

Sheikh Moh'd Abdullah stated as follows on February 5. : "I am sitting before the Security Council at a distance of thousands of miles from my country. I have fought many battles along with my own men on the borders of Jammu and Kashmir; I have seen with my own eyes the support given by the Pakistani Government not only in supplying bases, but in providing arms, ammunition, direction and control to the tribesmen; and I have seen the Pakistan Forces from across the borders". He exploded the fallacy contained in the demand of a "neutral and impartial" administration in Kashmir—a demand put forward to oust Sheikh Abdullah from his position as Head of the Emergency Administration in Kashmir—and introduce into it the henchmen of the League who were laying waste the fair Valley of Kashmir with fire and sword. He said, "if elections were to be held in the United Kingdom sometime with the Labour Government in power, would anyone say to Mr. Attlee : 'The elections are now going on. Because you happen to belong to the Labour Party, your sympathies will be in favour of the Labour vote. Therefore, you had better clear out.' We must have a neutral man as Prime Minister until our elections are finished."

Pakistan, in reply, denied the charge : It said in Document I, which contained its denial, further asserted that she was discouraging the raiders by all means.³

In Document II, Pakistan submitted counter-complaints against India. She said that India wanted to destroy Pakistan. She spoke of India's policy of genocide. India had not paid to Pakistan the share of undivided India's cash balance, etc.

In Document III, Pakistan called the accession of Kashmir's State as based on violence and fraud. Pakistan narrated the circumstances which had compelled the tribesmen from north-western area to help the Kashmiris in their liberation struggle

against the Maharaja.

Mr. Zaffarullah Khan prosecuted the case on behalf of Pakistan. It offered the following proposals for the solution of the problem :

1. Withdrawl of the fighting personnel as well as civilians who had gone into the State after or immediately before the raids began.
2. Setting of a joint administration under the two Governors-General of India and Pakistan.
3. Rehabilitation of all refugees who had gone out of the State.
4. Introduction into the State of either Commonwealth or U.N. forces.

The discussion that followed made it clear that the Anglo-American forces wanted to have a physical control over the state.

“The Security Council allowed the issue to be side-tracked when the President, Langhenove of Belgium, intervened to widen the agenda from “Jammu and Kashmir” to “Indo-Pakistan” dispute even overruling the Soviet delegate, Andrej Gromekoes’ protest against such an irregular procedure.” But Ayyangar stuck to his guns. He stated the view that the main job was to secure stoppage of hostilities.

President Longhenove introduced a resolution of January 17, 1948 which was passed. It stated that a commission of three should be composed which should proceed to the spot in order to find out the fact regarding the complaints of the two Governments and exercise “mediatory influence likely to smooth away the difficulties.”

But in spite of the objections from India and Pakistan, the resolution was adopted by the Security Council on April 21. And, by May 17, the membership of the United Nations Commission was completed.

Two resolutions⁴ were introduced on January 29 again by Langhenow. The first declared that the fate of Kashmir should be decided by a plebiscite under international control to ensure impartiality. The second provided that they should take up the duties “which would lend towards promoting the cessation of act of hostility and violence and which are rather of a particularly

urgent nature.”

Thus, the purpose simply was to abolish Abdullah's Government and to install western dominated administration. The two resolutions were opposed by Ayyangar who said that plebiscite must be done by the Government of the state of Jammu and Kashmir though under the advice and observation of the United Nations.⁵

Sheikh Abdullah had already spoken on February 5. He had emphasised that the question was not of accession of Kashmir. It had already acceded to India. The problem was that the tribesmen were being helped by Pakistan and this might become larger conflagration.

But the words of the Indian delegation fell on the deaf ears. The Indian delegation was recalled home for further consultation.

The Indian representatives returned from New Delhi where they had gone for consultation with the Government of India. The Security Council took up the Kashmir question again on March 10. After several meetings, a draft resolution was produced by the Security Council on April 12 in which it recommended the setting up of a commission of five members to proceed to the Indian subcontinent and place their good offices and mediation at the disposal of the Government of India and Pakistan.

India rejected the draft resolution as Mr. Ayyangar said, “It tars a with the same brush and makes us look like co-accused.” Pakistan also objected to the resolution but in spite of objections from India and Pakistan, the resolution was adopted by the Security Council on April 21. The membership of the United Nations Commission on India and Pakistan (UNCIP) was composed.⁶

When the Commission landed in Karachi on July 5, 1948, they were apprised by Sir Zaffarullah Khan that three Pakistani brigades had been on Kashmir territory since May for self-defence. The members of the Commission heard the Pakistan's foreign Minister's other reasons for moving the regular army in Kashmir and then it moved to Delhi to discuss the situation with the Indian Government. A few days later, Nehru expressed to Mr. Korbel of the Commission that, “We ourselves asked for a plebiscite. We

wish the nation of Kashmir to decide for itself. We did it spontaneously and not because of Pakistan. But now, about two months, there has been war going on in Kashmir. Kashmir is devastated, the administration is disrupted, the situation now is different what it was. The preparation for plebiscite would, of course, require the withdrawal of Pakistani forces and then a prolonged period of adjustment preceding the elections including such necessities as the return of refugees, their settlement and the like.

Foiled in its efforts to evolve a mutually acceptable formula, the Commission proceeded to record its opinion of what would be a fair solution. This took the form of the resolution of 13th August which was supplemented by another resolution of 5th January, 1949. These two resolutions were accepted by India and Pakistan and formed the basis for future discussions. These resolutions deserved some examination.

The resolution started with a declaration that the Government of India and Pakistan agreed to simultaneously order all the forces under their control in the State of Jammu and Kashmir to cease-firing. The date from which the cease-fire would be effective would be fixed by mutual agreement. The High Commands of the two forces would refrain from augmenting the potential of their forces in Kashmir. This should include all forces, organised or unorganised, engaged in hostilities. The Commission would appoint military observers to supervise the Cease-Fire Line (CFL) and note any violations.

Simultaneously, with the acceptance of the above proposals, the representatives of the two Government would negotiate the truce agreement. It was stipulated that Pakistan would withdraw its troops from the State. Pakistan would make its best endeavour to secure the withdrawal of tribesmen and Pakistani nationals from Kashmir. Pending a final solution, the territory evacuated by Pakistan would be administered by local authorities under the surveillance of the Commission.

When the Commission notified them that tribesmen and Pakistani nationals had withdrawn from the State, the Government of India would begin to withdraw the bulk of its forces from the

State in stages to be agreed upon with the Commission. Until the conditions for the final solutions are settled, the Indian Government could be entitled to maintain on its side of CFL the minimum forces which, in concord with the Commission, were considered necessary for the observance of law and order.

Finally, the Governments of India and Pakistan would reaffirm their desire that the future status of the State of Jammu and Kashmir would be determined according to the will of the people. Upon the acceptance of the truce agreement, both Governments would start consultations to lay down fair and equitable conditions to ensure free expression of will.

The cease-fire became effective one minute before midnight of the first day of the year 1949, a year after India had filed the complaint before the Security Council. Then, demarcating the cease-fire line was commenced. A dozen member countries of the United Nations were deputed for the task. They established their headquarters at Rawalpindi and Srinagar and the observers were deputed to take their positions on either side of the Cease-Fire Line. The Cease-Fire Line was based on the *status quo*, as it existed one minute before the last midnight of 1948. It had no rationale except the timing. It did not follow any physical features like watershed or Valley and river. The Cease-Fire Line was finally established on 29th July, 1949 and the agreement was signed by the military representatives of India and Pakistan at Karachi.

The members of the UNCIP were divided on their approach to the Security Council that the job of implementing Parts 2 and 3 of 13th August resolution as supplemented by the 5th January resolution be assigned to a single mediator. Gen. A.G.L. McNaughton, of Canada, its President those days, was appointed by the Council as the "informal mediator". He was to prepare a plan for the demilitarisation of the State after which there would be a plebiscite.

McNaughton thought that the withdrawal, disbandment and disarmament of armed forces from either side of the CPL should be done in stages. It would mean the withdrawal of the regular Pakistani forces from the State and such Indian forces which were not required to maintain the law and order on her side of the

CFL. The AKP and J & K's regular forces and militia would have to be reduced in numbers and strength. In Gilgit and Baltistan, the local authorities would function under United Nations supervision. After that, the Plebiscite Administrator would go ahead with the assigned task in terms of UNCIP resolution of 5th January. The proposals were not acceptable to India. The Government of Jammu and Kashmir recorded : "The Kashmir dispute has come to be viewed in the context of the present international situation with its compelling necessity upon the Governments of U.K. and U.S.A. to make concessions to Pakistan with a view to gaining its goodwill and support. Whatever proposals have emanated from these Governments for the settlement of the Kashmir dispute, overtly or covertly, they have favoured the position of the Pakistan Government." The augmentation of AKP in violation of the 13th August resolution was validated and that force was put at par with the regular forces and militia of the Kashmir Government. The local authorities of the Northern region, though they had no legal sanction, were recognised. The lawful Government of Kashmir was denied even notional sovereignty over the territories in Pakistan's occupation. The United Nations was given arbitrary powers." says A.K. Jain in 'Kashmir rule' in "Imprint".

The Security Council approved the proposals and Sir Owen Dixon, the eminent Judge of the Supreme Court of Australia was appointed the United Nations Representative. Sir Owen arrived on the sub continent on May 7, 1950. He was of the view that Pakistan had violated international law. He has recorded :

"Without going into the causes or reasons why it happened which presumably found part of the history of the subcontinent, I was prepared to adopt the view that when the frontier of the State of Jammu and Kashmir was crossed on, I believe, October 20, 1947 by hostile elements, it was contrary to the international law and when, in May, of 1948, as I believe, units of the regular Azad forces moved into the territory of the State, that too was inconsistent with international law."

Dixon's original recommendation suggested the withdrawal of entire Pakistani forces followed by entire forces of India before

holding plebiscite. The disbanding and disarming of the Azad forces and Gilgit Scouts in northern areas under Azad control should be administered by Political Agents appointed by the Security Council. The areas under State Government must be administered by the magistrates under the guidance of U.N. Officer.

Bamzai, the historian, remarks :

“It is interesting to note how the United Nations’ efforts at mediations tried to raise step by step, the status of Pakistan *vis-a-vis* India. First, the British and the U.S. delegates on the Security Council reduced India to the same level as Pakistan; the United Nations Commission on India and Pakistan manoeuvred an equality between the State administration and “Azad Kashmir”; later McNaughton proposed parity between the State Militia and “Azad Kashmir”; and now, Dixon assigned a relatively superior status to “Azad Kashmir and Pakistan.”

These negotiations fell through. Dixon was doubtful about the overall plebiscite in the State and proposed the alternative plans. (i) First, a plan for taking the plebiscite by section or area and allocation of each section or area according to the preference of the votes. (ii) A plan in which it was assumed that some areas would vote for India and others for Pakistan. Plebiscite would be confined to the disputed area like the Kashmir Valley. India liked the plan but Pakistan rejected it.

Thus, Owen Dixon⁸ failed to secure agreement, but he submitted to the Security Council his recommendations which rejected the overall plebiscite. Kashmir was not one economic, geographical and demographical entity and to allocate the whole of it to either India or Pakistan would create serious problems of dislocation or exodus. In his view, a partition based on territorial contiguity and geo-topographical consideration was the only alternative.

The Security Council once again relapsed into somnolence. But on Sheikh Abdullah’s effort to summon the Assembly for Kashmir to frame a Constitution for the State and to decide the question of accession to India, Pakistan approached the Security Council to stop the formation of Constitutional Assembly for the State. India’s representative assured the United Nations that this

step would not prejudice the decision of the United Nations. The Constitutional Assembly might just express its opinion on its accession to India.

Sir Owen Dixon resigned and another representative, Dr. Frank P. Graham of the United States of America, was appointed. He was asked to effect demilitarisation of Kashmir within three months and in case of failure, the matter was to be referred to the International Court of Justice in consultation with the parties. Nehru protested vehemently by saying that he would not allow the fate of four million people to be decided by third party. Pakistan started a war propaganda and Nehru, in his New Year's message of 1952, warned Pakistan that, if by any mistake, he invaded Kashmir, there would be a full-scale war between the two countries.

Graham could not convene a joint meeting of the two Prime Ministers and he met them separately. He sent his proposals to the two Governments in September, 1951. There was nothing new in the proposals except that all differences on the plan of demilitarisation would be settled by the United Nations Representative whose decision would be final. India was opposed to any kind of arbitration.

By the end of 1956, Pakistan had joined CEATO and Baghdad Pacts and had entered into military alliances of Western countries. India could not be of such help to America against Russia. Pakistan was intimately tied with America and Soviet Union showed leaning towards India. The internal situation in Pakistan was also bad. In the four years that followed the resignation of Mohammad Ali Bogra, there were not less than three Prime Ministers. Both the ruling party and the opposition vied with each other in raising the slogan of Jihad (holy war) against India.

Only the Prime Minister, Sir Feroz Khan Noon had the courage to state, "so long as I am Prime Minister, there is not going to be any war. I want Pakistan to be surrounded by friends." He avowed "war is not a solution of the Kashmir question." In early October, Feroz Khan Noon was dismissed from office and Pakistan's constitution was abrogated and President Iskandar Mirza installed with Moh'd Ayub Khan as the Military

Administrator. The formation of the Constitutional Assembly of the Kashmir State, which provided for the finalisation of the State's accession to India, gave provocation to Pakistan and they complained to the Security Council. The date of the inauguration of the Kashmir Constitutional Assembly coincided with the anniversary of India's Republic day on 26 January, 1957.

Ayub Khan soon eased out Iskandar Mirza and assumed the powers of a military dictator. For the next twelve years, Pakistan remained under military dictatorship. On second January, Pakistan informed the Security Council that direct negotiations between India and Pakistan having failed, the Prime Minister of India had gone back on his promise to hold a plebiscite. In fact, Kashmir Constitutional Assembly had decided to integrate the State with Union of India. Pakistan's Foreign Minister questioned the constitutional, representative character of the Assembly. He also charged India of having let loose a reign of terror. Pakistan invoked the provisions of the UNCIP resolutions of 13th August, 1948 and 5th January, 1949 and demanded that India must refrain from accepting the change envisaged in the new constitution by the Kashmir Constitutional Assembly, and secondly, to spell out obligations of the parties under Article 307 of the U.N. Charter and also arrange the withdrawal of the troops under UN auspices and protecting the state by a UN force.

India which had accepted the validity of the Security Council resolution of 17th January, 1948, the UNCIP resolution of 13th August, 1948 and 5th January, 1949, accused Pakistan of failure to fulfil the important conditions laid down in Part I of the 13th August resolution, namely, that it would "refrain from taking any measure that might augment the military potential of the forces under its control." Pakistan had increased the strength of Azad Kashmir forces and had constructed air strips in Gilgit, Chitral and Baltistan. During the Security Council sittings in 1957 and 1958, India was represented by V.K. Menon, the Defence Minister and Pakistan's case was represented by Pakistan's Foreign Minister Feroz Khan Noon. "Never before had our case been presented in such a detailed and elaborate manner, replete with quotations from documents and press reports. The main point that Menon

put across was that Kashmir was not a territorial dispute but a clear case of aggression by Pakistan, and that the Security Council must take action consistent with the crime of invasion." Regarding our Constitutional Assembly, he met the Pakistan tirade by saying that its action could be declaratory, not creative, because it was a 'sub-Sovereign' body.

Despite all the discussions, the Security Council adopted a resolution reaffirming the earlier UN and UNCIP resolutions, and also reaffirmed the resolution of 30th March 1951 that convening of the Constitutional Assembly and any action taken by it would not constitute the disposition of the State as envisaged by the U.N. United Nations. The Soviet Union opposed the U.N. views and remarked that the adoption of the Constitution by the State Constitutional Assembly showed that the people of the State considered it "to be, an inalienable part of the Republic of India."

The next month, in February, another resolution was introduced in the Security Council. The resolution requested the President of the Council, Gunnar Jarring, to consult the Governments of India and Pakistan on proposals that would contribute to the demilitarisation and settlement of the dispute, keeping in mind the resolutions passed by the Security Council and UNCIP. Of the two main proposals, that is, one for the consideration of the installation of UN Forces, Nehru reacted violently against the second. He emphatically said, "We have made it clear that under no circumstances will we accept any foreign force in our country." This time, Soviet Russia exercised its veto and the reference to the posting of a UN force had to be dropped. A modified resolution was passed, appointing Gunning Jarring as the mediator to consult India and Pakistan and make proposals for the solution of the dispute. Jarring suggested that the matter might be referred to an arbitrator. India was not prepared to accept arbitration for any purpose or in any form. Jarring, in his report said :

"In dealing with the problem under discussion as extensively as I have during this period just ended, I could not fail to take note of the concern expressed in connection with the changing political, economic and strategic factors surrounding the whole

of the Kashmir question, together with the changing pattern of power relations in the West and South Asia. The Council will furthermore be aware of the fact that the implementation of the international agreements of *ad hoc* character, which had not been achieved fairly and speedily, may become progressively more difficult because the situation with which they were to cope had tended to change.” He left the Council to decide upon its future action.

Dr. Frank P. Graham was once again despatched to the subcontinent to find a solution to the dispute. Graham proposed that the two Prime Ministers should meet to reaffirm their faith in the CFL. They should appeal to the respective people to assist in the creation and maintenance of an atmosphere favourable to further negotiations. The two should work out details for the administration of the territory vacated by Pakistan and consider possibility of a U.N. force being posted on the Pakistan side of the C.F.L. He suggested lastly that an early agreement should be reached on the interpretation of provisions relating to a plebiscite. The dispute was thus referred back to mutual negotiations. He left the subcontinent for New York on February 15.

Plebiscite Ruled Out

In the meantime, conditions in Kashmir had changed. During these years, Kashmir had made all round progress under India politically, economically and socially. Significantly, the U.S.A. had supplied considerable quantities of war material to Pakistan which had enabled it to negotiate with India from a position of strength. Moreover, the only basis of holding the plebiscite was the resolution of January 5, 1949 which provided a proper plan. But the conditions for implementing the plan were not fulfilled by Pakistan. Meanwhile, three general elections had been held in Kashmir and the people and unequivocally ratified the State's accession to India. Now, after a lapse of 14 years, Menon said nothing needs to be done in this part of Kashmir which would unstable it and create trouble in the South east Asia.

And, to sound the death-knell of the talks, Pakistan announced during their course the so-called agreement “under which Pakistan

gave away as much as two thousand square miles of our territory to China". Later on, there were three wars with Pakistan which resulted in devastation in the State of Jammu and Kashmir, but still, the discordant music of Pakistan continues.

In the meanwhile, Maharaja Sir Hari Singh passed away on April 26, 1961, and we are not concerned with what happened after his death. As we know, Pakistan itself was divided into two parts.

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The Exile

Lt. General His Highness Raj Rajeshwar Maharajadhiraj Sir Hari Singh Bahadur, Inder Mahinder, Sapar Saltant Englishia, K.C.S.I., K.C.I.E., K.C.V.E., LL.D., born on September 23, 1895, breathed his last in Bombay on April 26, 1961. According to his will, his body was cremated there in Bombay where he had been living as an exile from June 20, 1949; only his ashes were brought to his motherland in a silver urn by his only son, Dr. Karan Singh.

Dr. Karan Singh writes movingly in his "Autobiography" : "All of Jammu had gathered for the last homage; endless crowds, crying and wailing for a man who had left them a dozen years earlier as their Maharaja. And I carried the urn in an open car through the milling crowds. Thirty years ago, on the same route, my father and mother had driven in an open carriage through cheering throngs in celebration of my birth. Twelve years ago, my parents and I were taken out in a similar procession after my return from America. This time I was alone, my mother had donned the white clothes of the traditional Hindu widow and lay semi-conscious in Amar Mahal surrounded by wailing women, and all that was left of my father's body was a handful of ashes in the urn that I gently cradled in my hands. How much, in the end, does a man weigh!"¹

We may recapitulate the salient facts of his life and examine critically.

Maharaja Hari Singh's life, by and large, was a tragic one. No doubt, he was not assassinated directly like Caesar by any adversary, but he was injured and humiliated; harassed and abused and he got diabetes which later enhanced due to tension and suffered from heart trouble and thus he died.

His life reads like a Greek tragedy. He was a "man eminently good or just yet whose misfortune is brought not by vice but by some frailty". Maharaja Hari Singh had no prominent vice; he had remarkable humanism and sense of justice; he had no aberration of character like many other Indian princes who maintained a large harem of concubines, mistresses, courtesans and dancing girls.

On the other hand, he had married a warm-hearted, homespun village girl-buxom, blithe and debonair as his wife till end. There are dramatic epics composed in Dogri folklore round the life of this strong-willed soul and ballads in Dogri folk songs about him resound in the hills and dales of Jammu on festive and other functions.

Maharaja Hari Singh was faced with outer and inner conflicts. There were four outer forces at work against him. There was the imperialist power of the British hostile to him. Hari Singh irritated the British by his insolent behaviour towards the British Resident; he demanded back the full control over Gilgit due to its strategic position and greatly needed by the British Government. He got respite when he gave up the demand and handed over the Gilgit Wazarat in 1935 on a sixty years' lease. Another cause of British enmity was the expression of pro-nationalist sentiment at the Round Table Conference held early in 1931 in London. There he said : "As an Indian and loyal to the land whence we derive our birth and infant nurture, we stand as solidly as the rest for our land's enjoyment of position, of honour, of equality in British Commonwealth of Nations."²

His patriotism did not restrain to keep his mouth shut when diplomacy and personal interest required it. These and similar observations convinced the British that Hari Singh was not a man

to toe their line and till end conspired against him. Even later, when Mountbatten visited him in Srinagar in June, 1947, he did not hesitate to show his inclination in favour of Hari Singh's joining Pakistan, though at the same time, he admonished him that he could join either of the dominions before 15th August, 1947. The Maharaja was too patriotic to strike some surreptitious deal with the British. It may be mentioned that, according to Prem Shankar Jha³, "the Correspondence in the India Office Record Library shows that British not only expected, but wanted Kashmir to accede to Pakistan. It tried to persuade India not to accept the Maharaja's accession even when the raiders were a bare 17 miles from Srinagar. When it did accede to India, it did all it could to keep the door open for the decision to be reversed..."

There was Sheikh Moh'd Abdullah who was a charismatic leader of the Kashmiri Muslims and a good orator in Kashmiri. He made the Muslims conscious of their strength—"remove the Maharaja". It was a convenient banner and a battle-cry. He was fuiscerally anti-Maharaja and anti-Dogra and this made him popular among the Muslim masses of Kashmir. He was leaving no stone unturned to dethrone the Maharaja. Let us look into Hari Singh's mind. Though he was progressive, enlightened and modern in outlook, yet he was constitutionally incapable of being on equal footing with a demagogue. Sheikh Abdullah needed unfettered power and resorted to "Quit Kashmir Movement" in May 1946. He and his party molested the Maharaja. Nothing could expunge the memory of his mortification. But for those never-to-be forgotten affronts suffered at the hands of the National Conference men were really uncompromising. As Prem Nath Bazaz⁴, the political leader and a journalist has written that Sheikh Abdullah had no knowledge of history and politics and was not intelligent enough. "Sheikh Abdullah", Pt. Ram Chander Kak, the then Prime Minister of Kashmir is known to have said, "was a rat-catcher like the Pied Piper of Hamelin; he and his silly rats would be kept in a large mouse-trap". And, he did it with thoroughness, crushed the agitation and gave Sheikh three years' imprisonment for sedition and revolt. Had Pakistan raiders not invaded and Ram Chander Kak not been unceremoniously

dismissed, may be Kashmir would not have been dragged in the quagmire of the present horrifying situation.

Maharaja Hari Singh knew Sheikh Abdullah, who could play different tunes at different times and at different places. But Nehru was living in the rarified atmosphere of idealism and lacked the pragmatism of Patel. He knew nothing of Sheikh and believed that he would win plebiscite for him in Kashmir. Nehru wanted first to hold the election in the State and hand over the power to Sheikh Abdullah and then grant Kashmir's accession to India. To the Maharaja, reasonably enough, it was putting the cart before the horse. He first wanted the accession and then the election. He knew the holding of the election first would mean one man's and one party's dictatorship. Subsequent events proved it correct. According to Prem Shankar Jha, "It was far back as September, 1947 that Maharaja Hari Singh wrote to Nehru for the grant of accession to India. Nehru thought it discreet to keep it pending and did not mention of it to anyone. Even when the raiders were knocking at the doors of Srinagar on 26 October, 1947, the Government of India hesitated to send the army help. Jinnah was getting impatient to enter Srinagar in triumph and celebrate the Id there."⁵

When Jinnah learnt that raiders had been beaten back by the terrible onslaughts of the Indian troops, he got disappointed. In utter disgust, he telephoned his commander-in-Chief Gen. Gracey at Rawalpindi to send Pakistan's regular army into Kashmir. This could not be done and Kashmir Valley was lost to him and he could not, in his lifetime, set his foot on the soil of Srinagar.

Maharaja Hari Singh's Government had committed a stupid mistake when Nehru tried to force his way into the State on June 10, 1946, for he wanted to help Abdullah, who was undergoing three years' imprisonment. Pandit Nehru never forgave the Maharaja for this audacity. Nehru was immediately released.

Although, Jinnah spurned Sheikh Abdullah and was against his, "Quit Kashmir Movement" and supported the right of the rulers to decide the fate of their respective States, Maharaja Hari Singh was enough of a Hindu not to be able to stomach the aggressive Muslim communalism of the League and accede to a

theocratic State of Pakistan.

Maharaja Hari Singh was not enough of a diplomat like his great-grandfather, Maharaja Gulab Singh, willing to modify his plans and schemes to suit the weather of destiny.

So, all these forces arrayed against him and culminated in his utter defeat. His inner conflict emerges from his own nature,—his impulsive anger, pride and stubbornness. He never knew how to forgive and forget. Reconciliation was far from his character. There was no domestic peace in his house. The psychological and emotional imbalance between Hari Singh and his wife lead to a good deal of tension and mutual conflict. There could be no compatibility between a ruler and a village girl. All the same, no couple is congruent in character. They adjust to each other's idiosyncracies and temperaments.

But as we get a glimpse of the first phases of the wedded life of Maharaja Hari Singh and the Maharani from photo albums in Amar Mahal Library, it suggests that it was a blissful one, spent in the paradise of the palaces—idyllic scenes, mangrove groves, far-off green hills and they together engaged themselves in hunting, fishing and cooking and went on picnics. There was enough of human effect on and sympathy between the two. Maharaja Hari Singh was handsome, of fine figure, swarthy and stern in aspect and his wife was a wild, fresh flower from the wild hills of Kangra and naturally, they must have indulged in the little joys of life. But later on, the arrival of Nachint Chand, the elder brother of the Maharani, and his permanent stay in the Amar Mahal, brought a change in the attitude of the Maharaja towards his wife and his kind feelings and sympathy towards her dwindled. At the end, they got estranged and both the Maharaja and the Maharani were like Adam and Eve driven out of the paradise; the Maharaja went to Bombay never to return to his motherland and the latter went from Bombay to Kasauli, from Kasauli to Kangra and later from Kangra to Kashmir.

It was the hot day of June, 1949, not a whiff of fresh breeze blew and not a leaf stirred on the branches in Delhi. The very ground was hot and dry. But the Government of India saw the time urgent and appropriate to invite the Maharaja, the Maharani

and Yuvraj to Delhi from the cool hills of Jammu⁶. There, Vallabbhai Patel, in whom the Maharaja had complete trust, grimly passed the instructions of Nehru to the Maharaja Hari Singh and his wife. They must leave the State for some time and appoint the Yuvraj as the Regent. They were all bitterly disturbed at this evil turn of fortune. Hari Singh's soul must have naturally sunk within him as his face looked ashen. But he accepted the fate with a Rajput's soldierly fortitude and spoke not a word. Grim forces were at work to force all the other princes out of the stage. The last of the Dogra rulers was not deaf to the roar of the approach of the people's rule. But there was a difference! He was shabbily treated, injured and humiliated and Sheikh Abdullah and his party created a hulla-baloo and dramatised his departure. Hari Singh was the only prince out of 656 princes who was exiled. as related by Jagdish Singh, an employee of the Maharaja, his highness reminisced⁷ : "It is tragic that my great-grandfather, Maharaja Gulab Singh founded the united and compact State of Jammu and Kashmir and extended the boundaries of India. It is due to him that the Indian flag flies on the roof of India in Ladakh and Kargil and I myself have acceded to India, for no one else had the authority under India's Independent Act of British Parliament, on 27th October to India. This should have elicited gratitude in this country, instead I was vilified and traduced." In the days of exile, he again and again turned his own story over in his mind.

"It is very sad to contemplate that Maharaja Hari Singh was the one prince who left his family jewellery, shawls and regalia worth crores with the State Toshakhana (Treasury) which most others would have appropriated without turning a hair. He never harassed the population for personal ends, living an aloof and self-contained life in the palace. His administration and system of justice to this day is accepted by impartial observers as having been fairer than those of the post-1947 period. Corruption was far less and severely punished when it came to light"⁸, thus says Dr. Karan Singh in his *Autobiography*.

All know that he streamlined the whole Government set-up, cleared the mess and lanuched reforms. His work, detailed in the earlier pages of the book, are the proof of his concern for his

subjects. These ideas are poignant enough to sink deep in the memory of Hari Singh whose religion, as he declared on the Coronation Day, was justice and make him a fatalist.

During his exile in Bombay, there was a happy episode in the general drama of his pain, when Yuvraj Karan Singh was married on 5 March 1950 in Bombay to Princess Yesho Rajya Laxami, the grand-daughter of Rana Maharaj Shamsheer Jung Bahadur, the Prime Minister of Nepal. Maharaja Hari Singh was in high spirits never seen before and meticulously he worked out all the details of various functions, preceding and following the wedding. There was pomp and feast and revelry. Maharani Tara Devi was busy to make all the purchases. It was a big event for the Maharani as well but she was filled with a mixture of pleasure and apprehension.⁹ In Bombay, Maharaja Hari Singh restricted the invitees to close relatives only. It appears that none of the members of the Katoch family were invited in the Maharaja's house. May be, they were staying in some other house away from that of the Maharaja's. To the chagrin of the Maharani, Nachint Chand, as revealed by Yuvraj Karan Singh's wedding photographs present in Amar Mahal Library was nowhere to be seen in the various functions and his role was performed by one of the members of the Wazir family, Wazir Amin Chand.¹⁰

After the end of the wedding and other ceremonies connected with it, Maharani Tara Devi told her husband in a sulky mood: "I cannot stay in Bombay, which is getting hot. I must go to Kasauli with my brother", repeats Karan Singh in his 'Autobiography' (p. 117). Maharaja Hari Singh was upset as he had taken for granted that she would stay on after Yuvraj's marriage. He must have felt furious at her decision but he managed to restrain his wrath. In this lonely and ailing old age, one would expect his wife to give him love, devotion and comfort.

Strangely, Yuvraj kept silent; he didn't try to appease her resentment. Perhaps he knew that it was not possible to restrain her once she had made up her mind. Hari Singh, for some known and unknown reasons, hated Nachint Chand and said that he would exploit their house.

To his son, Maharaja Hari Singh was very affectionate without

being demonstrative and, as Dr. Karan Singh says¹¹, “He carried his photograph in his gold cigarette case.” He further says that “I began to realise that my father’s forbidding exterior was really something of a protective armour that he had developed through the circumstances of his life. As the only child brought up in a cloak and dagger atmosphere of court and family intrigue, he must have been through the traumatic situation before he grew to manhood. But I was sure he loved me.” The Maharaja, no doubt, was fond of Yuvraj.

Maharani Tara Devi’s departure from Bombay could not have been without reason. We have to go into the realm of conjecture. If it is true that the members of Katoch family did not participate in the Yuvraj’s wedding, this was a rash perversity for which Hari Singh had to suffer later on. Maharani could not tolerate that Nachint Chand could not live with her in Bombay. She would scorn to live where there was no honour and sympathy. She was not an automation—a machine without feeling. It also reveals the truth of her devotion to her brother.

Another occasion came when Maharaja Hari Singh and Maharani Tara Devi could meet again and iron out their old differences and make reconciliation. It was in October, 1956 when Yuvraj decided that he would leave his wife in Maharaja Hari Singh’s house in Bombay for she was in family way. Instead of asking Maharani Tara Devi to look after the Yuvrani during her confinement, the Maharaja cabled Beryl Steleman, an old friend’s wife from U.K. to be with her. Maharani Tara Devi had come to Kashmir from Kangra and she desperately hoped that her husband, despite the early estrangement, would ask her to come to Bombay. But he could not forget her leaving him after Yuvraj’s wedding and did not ask her to come to Bombay. Hari Singh was very fond of her daughter-in-law; Maharani Tara Devi and Yuvrani suffered from the minor mother-in-law and daughter-in-law syndrome. Hari Singh’s whole apartment was in perfect blaze of splendour and Yuvrani was very well looked after by Hari Singh, Beryl and Dr. V.S. Shirodkar, the great gynaecologist. But when the Maharaja came to know that a girl was born, he was rather disappointed.

Yuvraj and Yuvrani left for Srinagar and Maharani had already separated from her husband so that her brothers and their relatives could freely visit her at Amar Mahal where she stayed. On his own paternal side, Maharaja Hari Singh had no kindred. The number of faithful diminished, as if to justify the recluse at the close of his life. There were no musical parties as nothing was known of his earlier musicians and singers; even Malika Pukhraj had migrated to Pakistan. But he was grateful to two persons, one was suave Captain Dewan Singh, who served his as A.D.C; and the other was Pandit Bhim Sen Mahey, the intelligent Secretary. Then, there were some old loyal servants, who served him till death. His golden days were when his son arrived to spend a fortnight with him and when he received his letters. What a feeling of pride and elation fills a father's heart when he reads his son's letters!

About Hari Singh's days in Bombay, Anant Singh, the editor of National Sports, New Delhi, writes in April 1962 issue of the journal in his editorial¹² thus : "It was characteristic of him that he sealed his lips during his life time and refused to say anything in self-defence and self-justification. After the forced relinquishment of his "gaddi", he retired into complete isolation. Not a statement he issued to explain or denounce the wild accusation flung at him. So much so that he did not come to Delhi during the 15 years of his political exile in Bombay. He scrupulously avoided meeting politicians and newspapermen. Even when he went to Europe for medical advice, he declined to visit England where he had friends in the political and diplomatic world. He was anxious not to embarrass his country's Government by any move or act which could be misunderstood or misinterpreted and thus become a handle for anti-Indian propaganda."

He lead a secluded life of simplicity and did not go to clubs or entertain friends and visitors. He had no love for extravagance or ostentation. This was specially after his exit from the political scene. Although he went to Europe a couple of times and would take interest in races at Poona and Bangalore, essentially, he was confined to his own house. He became a sort of recluse.

The separation from his family proved him more sorrowful than the loss of his throne. He must have felt forlorn. "Ah! where are the lovely skies of Jammu? If only I could go thither, the People of Jammu would have received me with open arms and would have become my family. Think of our Dogras, their courage and their pride." He told his aide and then corked up the turmoil of his feelings with great control.

The best way of getting through the weary hours was by reading. He read books on history, geography and illustrated books on castles and mansions of England, Europe and America. He read mystery novels like the "Mystery of the Court of London" and "The Mystery of the Court of Paris." He also read books on architecture and engineering. He had a beautiful set of Encyclopedia Britannica and some travel books and he could get a large number of British magazines. There were books on racing and polo which he read voraciously. All these books are housed in the Amar Mahal Museum and Library. He had passion for witnessing races and would go to Mahalaxmi Race Course in Bombay and also go to Poona and Bangalore for this purpose.¹³

But he had suffered from diabetes for many years and unfortunately he refused to take insulin injections. Naturally, a serious and painful carbuncle developed on his neck in the late fifties. His son, who visited him off and on, was deeply worried. "It is a matter of satisfaction that our relations remained proper and there were never overt unpleasantness. I was very careful to maintain all the respect that he deserved as head of the family. I wrote cordial letters, spent a fortnight or so with him every winter", writes Dr. Karan Singh.

All his life, Maharaja Hari Singh was indifferent to religion and had paid no attention to his spiritual element and never took to prayers and meditation. In exile also in Bombay, he had no time for rituals, religious mumbo-jumbo, or horoscope, etc. Misfortune, both domestic and political, so relentlessly had dogged him that even a modicum of stoicism was not left in him. Fate was through and through hostile to him and tortured him physically, mentally and emotionally. But he faced it with defiant endurance. Shelley's words are true to him in those dark days :

*“Alas! I have no hope nor health
Nor that content surpassing wealth
The sage in meditation found
And walked with inward glory crowned.”*

But the revealing light of Swami Dayanand and his doctrines made a deep impression on him and he found the anchor that made him feel secure.

To an old man, life appears as rapid as a train passes, but in the case of Hari Singh, seclusion and renunciation enabled him to look inward and form the habit of retrospection. The past does not evaporate like some volatile essence with distance and his distant children and even his wife were the *raison d’etre* and their thoughts he must past each day. “It is my fate to remain a helpless witness to the State’s mutilation—Gilgit, Muzafferabad, Mirpur, Bhimber and large portion of Poonch and Rajouri were under the possession of Pakistan. I wrote to Sardar Patel on 31 January, 1948 to give me the command of the army and in no time I shall be able to drive them from the occupied areas, but in vain. My condition is a daily trauma. You see, what does a common man know of democracy in the modern sense; it was yet an embryonic force. The new situation has irrevocably changed the political, social, physical and psychological profile of the State. I am not against democracy, but I love the British Parliamentary Government under the aegis of a king. Abdullah had agreed, but then, he took a topsy-turvy position.” He in a murmur told to his aide. No doubt, he internalised every nuance of his cataclysmic metamorphosis. His lament on the situation had the rising of a genuine revulsion as he off and on expressed to late Shree Jagdish Singh, his Supervisor. He would have died of boredom but his magnificent obsession, as is well known, polo and pony, kept him cheerful and he had no need to seek any other distraction.

Yuvraj, through all his life, loved his father but he loved his mother more. Thus, he and Yuvrani visited his mother at Kasauli in August, 1950 where they found a few members of her paternal family present there. He was happy that she was keeping well. And, as Levina Melwani, in her article in “India Worldwide”, New York dated October, 1989 writes : “Unlike other princely remnants

of Raj, Karan Singh never got into the Bombay race-track and jet-set syndrome. Perhaps, the genes of his down-to-earth mother are dominant in him". In the last years of her life, she lived in Amar Mahal in Jammu where she was well looked after by her son and brothers.

In 1961 when Maharaja Hari Singh was sixty-six, he had grown thin and had to go to the lift in a wheel chair for his evening drive to see his beloved horses.¹⁴ Dr. Karan Singh, on his trip to England in 1961, broke his journey at Bombay to see his father. He and his wife stayed there for five days. Hari Singh gave him a list of articles to be purchased in London. He was unwell, though cheerful. Yuvrani said to him, "Bapu Ji, if you are not keeping well, we will cancel the tour."

"No daughter, go", said he, though sadly. His last words to his son, Dr. Karan Singh were, "be good and look after her" and throughout his life, Karan Singh kept his advice in mind and acted on it.

Dr. Karan Singh and his wife had gone from London to Rome on 24th April, 1961. It was there that he was informed by the Indian Ambassador in Rome, Shree S.N. Haksar about his father, Hari Singh's demise. He was shocked and choked and no word came out of his mouth and his wife shed tears in profusion. She was much attached to Hari Singh. The flight from Rome to Bombay left in the evening. They reached Bombay on the 28th morning. Hari Singh, it was known, had suddenly taken ill on 26th April and a long bout of coughing brought about a heart attack. The doctor came at once and gave him injections but they were of no use. There is unbearable pathos in his last words, "Dr. I am going." Paradoxically, there was no near and dear ones present to speak. After an hour or so, he was dead.

According to his will, Maharaja Hari Singh was cremated in Bombay with Arya Samaj rites and this had been performed before the arrival of his son and Yuvrani. Yuvraj went to the cremation ground and collected the bones which were consigned to the sea in Apollo Bunder. Later, Maharaja's ashes were placed in a silver urn and carried by Dr. Karan Singh in a chartered aeroplane to Jammu, where they were, according to Hari Singh's Will, scattered

over the Jammu city, where he was born.

Despite the instructions in the will that no religious ceremonies should be performed, the Yuvraj performed his religious duty as a son and went through the observance of the thirteen days period according to the scriptures. He had to perform various kinds of prayers, sleep on the floor, eat only once a day and not shave. Maharani Tara Devi also observed the strict regulations as a widow for one year. Her health terribly deteriorated due to the stress of the penance. Thus ended the life of the dignified man who ruled for 22 years from 1925 to 1947.

Maharaja Hari Singh's Will

It is understood that Maharaja Hari Singh, in his last will and testament dated 4th March, 1960 appointed Shri Tricumdas Dwarikadas, Senior member of Messers Kanga and Co. Solicitors, Bombay and failing him the next senior member of Messers Kanga and Co. and Trustees of the D.A.V. College Management, New Delhi for the establishment of an Agricultural College and School at Nagmani in Jammu where orphans will be admitted free of charge and fees.

National Sports, New Delhi in a special Kashmir Number dated April 1962 reports under the caption "Ashes for Jammu City—Riches for Charity": "The Maharaja of Kashmir, who passed away in Bombay on April 26, 1961 was disposed of in an unorthodox way, instead of being immersed in some holy river like the Ganges.

"According to reports, in his will, he had expressed a desire that his ashes should be carried to Jammu where the Dogra Rajput of the Dogra Dynasty, Maharaja Gulab Singh had established his rule..."

And, instead of being consigned to water, the ashes were scattered over Jammu, which is dominated by the splendid spires of the Raghunath temple. The Maharaja, who had resigned to his political fate in his later years, had specifically decreed that his remains should be cremated in Bombay.

This was the reason for the funeral being held in Bombay, though several telegrams from both the Jammu city and Srinagar

were asking for the body to be brought over there for cremation.

The Maharaja was a wealthy man, his private fortune being estimated at several crores of rupees. Inquiries indicated that he had bequeathed most of the riches to the Arya Samaj, the Maharaja being a devout Arya Samajist.”

Nargis Das Nargis, the historian and journalist, writes in his monumental Urdu book “Tarikh-e-Jadid Dogras Des” that Maharaja Hari Singh donated most of his personal property for opening an Agricultural College in which poor boys should be given knowledge about agriculture. In his will is also written that the D.A.V. College management should sell some property and establish a fund called “His Highness Maharaja Hari Singh Fund for Orphans”. The income from the fund may be used in some business which the Trustees think as proper and from this income, some part must be spent for imparting free education (including agriculture training).

Nargis Das Nargis¹⁵, the historian and veteran and renowned journalist and author, in his book “Tarikh-e-Duggar” writes : “The late Maharaja was, by nature, a self-respecting man who would live and die for his honour. He always stuck to his word and had strong determination and courage. He had liberal ideas and was a progressive man. He had received such education from his childhood that, as a ruler of Jammu and Kashmir State, he did great deeds for the good and welfare of the common man that no other ruler of Indian princely State had done.” He further writes,

“Even Sheikh Moh’d Abdullah remorsefully expressed his deep grief at Maharaja’s death and said that “I had political differences with him but I have no hesitation in saying that he had a brilliant head and heart. He was probably the only Maharaja who demanded the freedom of India. With his demise, an era has come to an end.”

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Epilogue

The Rising of the Sun

After sunset, there is sunrise. The crimson rays of the setting sun are a prelude to the brighter golden rays of the morrow's rising sun.

A man lives through his son, who is born from his seed, an element of life. Maharaja Sir Hari Singh (the late ruler of Jammu and Kashmir) ruled over the State founded by his great-grandfather, Maharaja Gulab Singh; late Maharaja Hari Singh still lives through his son, Maharaja Dr. Karan Singh who shines brilliantly on the horizon of India's intellectual and political sky. His ODYSSEY THROUGH LIFE forms an epilogue of this book.

*Dr. Karan Singh's
Odyssey Through Life*

HYMN TO SHIVA

*"I am Your plaything;
You can breathe into me
The fire of eternal life
And make me immortal
Or you can scatter my atoms
To the far corners of the Universe
So that I disappear forever
I am Your plaything
The choice is Yours."*

KARAN SINGH

Poet, philosopher and author, Dr Karan Singh is a connoisseur of fine arts and has travelled extensively around the world. He would have been a Maharaja. Instead, he was catapulted into political life in 1949. He was Regent, elected *Sadar-e-Riyasat* and Governor of Jammu & Kashmir, Minister in the Union Cabinet, Member of Parliament, and India's Ambassador to the United States. At present, he is a member of the Rajya Sabha.

Come and join me in following Dr Karan Singh, on his 70th birthday, on his journey through life.

Early Life

The day was 9th of March in the year 1931. On that crisp spring morning, suddenly, the guns started booming from the massive fort on the high hills of Hari Parbat on the outskirts of Srinagar City. They were heralding the birth of the heir-apparent to His Highness Maharaja Hari Singh and Her Highness Maharani Tara Devi in the distant but fashionable resort of Cannes on the French Riviera. The people poured out into streets all over the State to rejoice and celebrate the momentous event. Sweets were distributed to schoolchildren and the poor were given rice and money. The next three days were declared public holidays; public and private buildings were profusely illuminated and prisoners were granted amnesty.

The heir to the throne of the largest princely State in India, he was sequestered in royal palaces with their army of courtiers and attendants and was forced into the princely pastimes of horse riding, polo and shikar. The astonishing part is that Dr Karan Singh broke the shackles of princely traditions that bound him and emerged to ride the crest of the wave of egalitarianism that swept India after independence. The treasured moments of his childhood were with his mother; a deeply pious lady with her roots firmly embedded in her culture. She taught him songs in the lilting Dogri language and instilled in him a deep love for the Dogri culture. Over the years, that love has further deepened and made him proud of his Dogra heritage. During his studies in the Doon School in Dehradun, he was a prolific reader. The books that he read opened before him the vast world that lay outside the ramparts of his palace. He did his M.A. in Political Science from the Delhi University, securing first class first that is still a record. Later, he did his Ph. D. from the same university on the political thoughts of Sri Aurobindo. Bharatiya Vidya Bhawan published his Ph. D dissertation. Jawaharlal Nehru, in his foreword to the book, wrote : "It is significant to note that he should have devoted himself to his studies and, more particularly,

to this analysis of the political thoughts of Sri Aurobindo during a crucial period of our history, instead of occupying himself with the normal activities of Indian princes, that is shikar, polo and high society”.

When quite young, he had a horrific experience that shook him gravely and made him take a decision of great import. He writes of the incident : “At this time, I went out to Dachigam and shot a bear while it was eating mulberries on one of the trees. It fell to ground shrieking pitifully like a child and lay there for long till it died. These cries haunted me for weeks and as a result, I decided to give up shooting and fishing. It was evidently the same influence that led privately to record a signed note on 1st January, 1952 to the effect that my long-term aim was to achieve spiritual enlightenment and peace, and to successfully spread its message throughout the world, which is rushing headlong into the dark and frightening abyss of destruction along the road to hatred, envy, cruelty and fanaticism; man can be saved and tuned towards the clear sunlit path of peace, happiness, love and universal prosperity. I was just under twenty-one years when I wrote it.”

Dr Karan Singh's life has not been one of unbroken bliss. At a young age, he met with an accident that confined him to sickbed for long and left him with a permanent limp. He underwent surgery for it in a New York hospital and recuperated there for a year. The Dewey-Truman presidential race was then in full swing and the young prince learnt most of the intriguing facets of American democratic process from his bedside television.

Two Stages of His Life

Initially, he tried sincerely to articulate the urges and aspirations of the people of Jammu. Along with others, he led the renaissance movement of the Dogri literature and culture. Gradually, the dimensions of his activities widened to include the entire state of Jammu & Kashmir founded by his illustrious ancestor, Maharaja Gulab Singh.

The days immediately after independence were turbulent. The movement of nationalism was in full swing and the sun was

setting on the glamorous world of the Maharajas. At the age of 21, Dr Karan Singh exhibited remarkable maturity and wisdom by accepting Sheikh Abdullah's offer to be elected as the *Sadr-i-Riyasat* in the teeth of opposition from his father, whom he loved intensely. From the vantage of hindsight, one could say that his superb tact and remarkable ability to walk the razor's edge of Kashmir's politics saved Jammu & Kashmir from disintegrating. The unchallenged power enjoyed by Sheikh Abdullah as Prime Minister of J&K had gone to his head and affected his judgement. As early as 1951, he was toying with the idea of independence for the Valley with himself as its Grand Moghul. Believing that he held all the trumps, he became belligerent and declared that he would meet the Government of India on his own terms. Time brings its awkward revenge. It was Dr Karan Singh who dismissed him from Prime Ministership of the State and arrested him in 1953. A victim of his own hubris, Sheikh Abdullah was never able to recover from his fall from power.

Quest For Truth

Early in his life, Dr Karan Singh embarked on his quest for truth. His quest led him to Yoga and the Upanishads; he translated some of these "scriptures into English. He realised that the human predicament revolves round human consciousness. Man constitutes the body, the mind and the soul. Therefore, the imperative is that while we look outside for solutions, we must look deep within to realise the truth. According to Dr Karan Singh, Yoga deals essentially with understanding the inner being. There are indications that he may have gone beyond the threshold of spiritual consciousness and may have felt the rising of the Kunadalini. The second volume of his Autobiography reveals his spiritual experiences and the spiritual influences on him of the seers like Shri Krishna Prem and Shri Madhava Ashish.

By assimilating Oriental and Occidental philosophies, he is able to craft a foundation upon which he based his own system of life. At this stage of his life, Dr Karan Singh has a deep commitment to the survival of human race on this planet. It is an age of paradox; we are facing an apparently insurmountable

dilemma. J B Priestly says “No doubt, the achievements of science are great and man is no longer a helpless toy in the hands of nature. He has pushed out the boundaries of knowledge but thereby he has endangered the possibilities of human life on the globe. At this time, the whole world is rocked in a crescendo of convulsions and the fate of humanity is precariously poised on a precipice”.

Four Concepts

Dr Karan Singh has been making all-out effort to synthesise Western scientific thought and the Eastern wisdom to bring together science and spiritualism. At present, upper most in his mind are four concepts.

The first is the concept of humanity. The *Rigveda* propounds that the world is a family. “*Vasudhaiva kutumbakam*”. Dr Karan Singh believes that, with the help of science and technology, the sphere of his activities can be extended so that he becomes a global citizen and is at home wherever he happens to be. He firmly believes that this concept must become the bedrock of energy of the global society. He advances the cause of global society through his association with myriad of institutions. He has been the President of the Authors Guild of India, the Commonwealth Society of India, the Auroville Foundation and the India International Centre. He is member of the prestigious Club of Rome and the Club of Budapest. A lifelong conservationist, he was Chairman of the Indian Board of Wildlife for many years and Chairman of the spectacularly successful conservation programme, “Project Tiger”, and is now Member of the Board of the Green Cross International and the President of the People’s Commission on Environment and Development India.

The second concept relates to integral yoga. He believes that life cannot be divided into intellectual, emotional and psychological compartments. It has to be viewed in its totality and there has to be a balance between the three aspects. Through his prolific writings, he has articulated his philosophy of perfect balance.

The concept of evolution of consciousness is the third one. According to his theory of evolutionary development of man, Dr Karan Singh thinks that man is at an intermediate stage between God and animal, and there is the distinct possibility of a quantum leap in the evolution of man's consciousness.

The fourth concept is his belief that religions are so many paths to the same divine. The dictum in the *Rigveda* "*Ekam sad, viprah vahuda vadanti*" (there is one truth, the wise call it by many names) propounds the essential unity of all religions. Dr Karan Singh set up the Centre for Global Consciousness on 9th March 1995 in the Amar Mahal Library & Museum in Jammu. Its aim is to disseminate the knowledge of global consciousness and to bring together the scholars and the seekers from diverse religious traditions and philosophical disciplines to study and promote this cardinal truth.

Conclusion

A journalist once questioned him, "You have played many roles—Prince, Regent, Governor, politician, philosopher, writer, etc. Which has been the most satisfying to you?" His response was illuminating, "Let me put it this way; all the various activities that I have undertaken ultimately revolve around an inner centre. As long as the centre is there, whatever you do should revolve around the same centre. It is when your centre gets upset then you become a fractured person. What I have tried to do is to maintain an inner centre, an inner spiritual awareness, if you like. And then, all the activities I undertake do not conflict with each other. I would say, really, that the most rewarding of all is the inner quest, my study of the Vedanta and meditation. But that is not something I am doing exclusively. It is not as if I have gone into a forest and am sitting there. I do everything else, but that is the centre that keeps my feet on the ground and that keeps me centred as a personality."

Appendices

*Treaty of Amritsar and the
Foundation of the State*

Treaty between the British Government on the one part and Maharaja Gulab Singh of Jammu and Kashmir on the other concluded on the part of the British Government by Frederic Currie, Esq., and Brevet Major Henry Montgomery Lawrence, acting under the order of the Right Honourable Sir. Henry Lawrence. G.C.B., one of Her Britannic Majesty's Most Honourable Privy Council, Governor General of the possessions of the East India Company, to direct and control all their affairs in the East Indies and by Maharaja Gulab Singh in person-1846.

Article 1

The British Government transfers and makes over forever in independent possession to Maharaja Gulab Singh and the heirs male of his body all the hilly mountainous country with its dependencies situated to the eastward of the River Indus and the westward of the river Ravi including Chamba and excluding Lahul, being part of the territories ceded to the British Government by the Lahore State according to the provisions of Article IV of the Treaty of Lahore, dated 9th March, 1846.

Article 2

The eastern boundary of the tract transferred by the foregoing article to Maharaja Gulab Singh shall be laid down by the Commissioners

appointed by the British Government and Maharaja Gulab Singh respectively for the purpose and shall be defined in a separate engagement after survey.

Article 3

In consideration of the transfer made to him and his heirs by the provisions of the foregoing article, Maharaja Gulab Singh will pay to the British Government the sum of seventy-five lakhs of Rupees 'Nankshahe, fifty lakhs to be paid on the ratification of the Treaty and twenty five lakhs on or before the 1st October of the current year A.D. 1846.

Article 4

The limits of the territories of Maharaja Gulab Singh shall not be at any time changed without concurrence of the British Government.

Article 5

Maharaja Gulab Singh will refer to the arbitration of the British Government any dispute or question that may arise between himself and the Government of Lahore or any other neighbouring State, and will abide by the decision of the British Government.

Article 6

Maharaja Gulab Singh engages himself and heirs to join, with the whole of his Military Forces, the British troops, when employed within the hills or in the territories adjoining his possessions.

Article 7

Maharaja Gulab Singh engages never to take or retain in his service any British subject not the subject of any European or American State without the consent of the British Government.

Article 8

Maharaja Gulab Singh engages to respect in regard to the territory transferred to him, the provisions of Articles V, VI, and VII of the separate engagement between the British Government and the Lahore Durbar dated 11th March, 1846.

Article 9

The British Government will give its aid to Maharaja Gulab Singh in protecting his territories from external enemies.

Article 10

Maharaja Gulab Singh acknowledges the supremacy of the British Government and will; in token of such supremacy, present annually to the British Government one horse, shawl goats of approved breed (six males and six females) and three pairs of Kashmiris shawls.

This Treaty of ten articles has been, on this day settled by Frederick Currie, Esquire, and Brevet-Major Henry Montgomery Lawrence, acting under directions of the Right Honourable Sir Henry Hardinge, G.C.B., Governor-General on the part of the British Government and by Maharaja Gulab Singh in person, and the said Treaty has been on this day ratified by the seal of the Right Honourable Sir Henry Hardings, G.C.B., Governor-General.

(Done at Amritsar on the sixteenth day of March), in the year of our Lord one thousand eight hundred and forty six, corresponding with the seventeenth day of Rubee-al-Awal 1262 Jijree)

(Signed) H. Hari Singh (Seal)

(Signed) F. Currie

(Signed) H. M. Lawrence

By Order of the Right Honourable the Governor-General of India.

(Signed) F. Currie,

Secretary to the Government of India
with the Governor-General

K.M. Panikkar writes, "This treaty stands on a different footing from other treaties with Indian States. The territories of which the Maharaja was recognised as ruler were handed over to him in independent possession. While the supremacy of the British Government was acknowledged, there was no agreement on the part of the Company to guarantee the internal security of the State, Article 9 merely bidding the British authorities to give aid to Maharaja Gulab Singh in protecting his territories from external aggression."

APPENDIX-2

Proclamation of Maharaja Hari Singh, July 9, 1931

To My Beloved People

From time immemorial, all communities within the State have been living on terms of closest harmony and friendship with each other and I used to take the greatest pride in the fact that we were happily free from all communal strife. I am, therefore, greatly pained to see that quite recently, owing to external influences, a changed and regrettable attitude is observable in certain sections in the cities of Jammu and Srinagar. This is greatly to be deplored. Two unfortunate incidents occurred recently in Jammu city, which could not, by any stretch of imagination, be associated with any action or policy of my Government and for which the responsibility widely misrepresented inside and outside the State so as to convey to those who were not in a position to know the true facts that the policy of my Government is such that Islam is in danger. It is not my intention to deal with the details of these incidents in the message as they are being dealt with separately. So far, I have preferred that my Government be judged by its actions alone. But, numerous representations from my loyal subjects of all sects and creeds have reached me within the last few days to the effect that even though at present it finds no response, it is calculated to promote communal strife and might even leave to the breach of the public peace in some cases. It has accordingly been deemed necessary to make this formal announcement of the policy and intention of myself and my Government in regard to such

propaganda and communal relations within the State generally.

At the beginning of my rule, I announced to you my people, that my religion is justice. That announcement has guided all my public acts and policies and I shall always adhere to it. I have made up my mind and will not permit any discrimination against any class of my people on the grounds of religion. The humblest of my subjects have free and direct access to me and any grievances my people may have can be submitted by them to me personally. Subject to two fundamental conditions, viz.,

(i) that political activities are confined within the law of the land, and

(ii) that no outside intervention is sought in any shape and form.

I have no desire whatsoever to suppress the legitimate requests and voice of my people whether expressed in writing or in speech. It is my intention to give effect to these views, but I am unable to do, so long as communal tension exists, for fear of aggravating it. Consequently, the first essential thing is that the leaders of the various communities should take immediate action to put a stop to all political activities tending to prevent the re-establishment of friendly relations between them. As soon as it is reported to me that any community has faithfully responded to my desire, I shall be prepared to receive and consider most sympathetically any representation that community may desire to submit to me.

Every person with the State is, and shall always be, free to practise his own religion, subject to the paramount necessity of maintaining public peace and public order. I, particularly wish to refer in this connection to a malicious rumour now being spread that cow killing is shortly going to be permitted. And, it has given me great pleasure to receive from my Muslim subjects spontaneous condemnation of such an insinuation or any other insinuation likely to injure the religious susceptibilities of any other community. There is no question of making any change in the matter.

In regard to recruitment of the State services, prior consideration is and shall be given to the public interest and the obligation of maintaining the efficiency of the administration at the highest possible level can never be overlooked. There is also no desire to follow the blind rule of parentage for various communities irrespective of qualification and merit. Subject to these conditions, the policy governing recruitment will be such that no class or community should

gain undue predominance in any branch of the public service and that adequate responsibility is secured to duly qualified hereditary State Subjects from all classes and communities of my people. Instructions to this effect have been recently issued and I shall watch closely their practical execution by my officers.

I have dealt in a brief manner with what I conceive to be points of major importance with regard to which some misunderstanding prevails in certain quarters. I trust such misunderstanding will be dispelled by the authorities, enunciation of my beliefs and intentions in consonance with these views in your best interests. Whenever I have found that any of you have been led into wrong action, I have always tried to make you see the error of your ways and to win you over to the right path by reasoning and conciliation. I am not a believer in false ideas or prestige, for I hold just action a sign of strength and not of weakness. But should God forbid all appeal to reason fail, I must discharge in effective manner the supreme responsibility which rests on me for the maintenance of law and order. I cannot allow my Government to be coerced by threat into unjust action and it is my duty to protect the law-abiding sections of my people from encroachment on their lawful rights. The immediate burden of maintaining law and order necessarily falls on the Magistracy and the Police whose duty it will be to see that the law is upheld at all costs, and where the law is defied, its authority will be restored. It is duty of the Police to act impartially and with calm judgement in such emergencies and I wish to assure them that they will be supported by myself and my Government in the due discharge of their duty and will not be sacrificed to unjust clamour or intrigue.

In conclusion, I trust that the old policy of 'live and let live', which characterised your relations with each other in the past, will be restored. It is easy to excite public feeling by misrepresentation, but it is difficult to restore harmony and friendship. Do not attribute false motives to those placed in authority over you or to one another. As regards people outside the State, whether Hindus or Mohammedans, I ask them not to interfere in any way in matters concerning my State and my people, as I do not interfere in matters concerning British India and British Indians. The whole basis of political action is impaired if one political unit interferes in the domestic concern of another. I do not wish to claim immunity from legitimate criticism of the acts and policy of my Government, which

I have no hesitation in saying, have always been designed to promote the moral and material progress of my people. It is my duty and my one aim in life to maintain the progressive character of my administration. But this end is defeated by unjustifiable outside intervention which has, within the last weeks, done nothing but immense harm to the true interests of you all. I pray to God that you will receive the light of truth and wisdom and that you will live peacefully and happily with one another as before.

Sd/- Hari Singh, G.C.I.E.,
K.C.V.O., A.D.C.
Maharaja of Jammu and Kashmir

APPENDIX-3

Inaugural Address of the Maharaja to the Praja Sabha, 1934

We recently expressed our wish and pleasure that means be designed whereby our people may be more closely associated in our Councils; and in pursuance of our commands thus declared, those persons appointed by us to give practical shape to our wishes have submitted their recommendations which have been accepted by us.

The assemblage present here this day is the outcome of the labours to give outward form to our behests. It is the first of its kind in recent times, but, of old, the duties which you will have to perform were duties which were always shouldered, and loyally discharged by the "Praja" ever since the monarchy came into being in this ancient land of India. To acquaint themselves with the needs of their people, the kings of old have caused to be performed, and maintained by bodies from village Panchayats upto assemblies of this nature, our own records bear witness to this.

For our part, we declare that Divine Providence laid upon us the sacred duty to care equally for all those committed to our guardianship, and we can recognise no difference between one person and another or between one class and another. They are all our beloved children, whatever their persuasion or creed, and we desire to protect, foster, guide and advance them by every means in our power.

Out of the great love and affection we bear our beloved subjects, we have called you to do your party in working for the well being of

the State. We have appointed your task and indicated the lines of the service you can render to yourself and to your ruler whose ordained duty it is to safeguard and promote your best interests. We desire you to enter upon the discharge of your responsibilities in such a way that your behaviour may be an example to others and your achievements at once a model for them to emulate and a monument to your earnestness and your loyalty to the State that you serve.

No one here today can fail to realise that both in theory and practice, the existence of a stable society and a peaceful community involves, and presupposes, a head, whose sway must be ungrudgingly accepted, and whose behests must be loyally carried out, if the harmony and orderly progress of the community is to be achieved. In recent times, certain nations have departed from this, and the world has witnessed the sorry spectacle of chaos and anarchy. The fate of these nations should provide us with an object lesson. Those who have chosen precipitately to break from their ancient moorings have not yet found the haven of peace; they are still floundering in stormy waters. Peace and harmony are the essential conditions of progress and prosperity and all can see that the world of the present day, after experiencing the storm and stress of unsettlement, is once again discovering the axiom that peaceful progress, even if slow, is in the long run the best indeed, the only way.

Beware of impassioned utterances so much in vogue today. They invariably formulate unbalanced and unpractical ideals that are as much divorced from decisive factors and stern realities as they are foreign to the genius of our race. Cultivate sobriety of thought and expression, shunning all the disruptive and devote all your energies to creative and constructive work which alone can help to ameliorate the lot, and conducive to the happiness of those whose spokesmen you have undertaken to be.

With these words of counsel and admonition by which we hope to plant the feet of our beloved subjects on the path of solid progress and achievement, we hereby declare this Praja Sabha (State Assembly) duly and well inaugurated and opened.

May the Dispenser of all Bounties in His infinite mercy and wisdom bless your labours, and may those labours, conducted in perfect harmony, rebound to the credit of our subjects whose first chosen representatives you are...

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