Chapter Three

Multi-Faceted Lion

From National Conference to ‘Accession’

After transforming the Muslim Conference into the National Conference, Shaikh Abdullah tried to ‘lift it into the fold of Indian National Congress.’ This was an open breach of a promise he had made with Ghulam Abbas only a year before that the National Conference would remain aloof from both the Congress and the Muslim League. He also endorsed the policy of the Congress towards the World War Second in the National Conferences’ Anantnag session, held between 29 September and 1 October 1939. He along with many other leaders also attended the Tripura session of the Congress in March 1939. Within a couple of years he intermingled his movement with Congress and replaced Kashmiri identity with Indian identity “when there was no easy correlation between the two.” In the Mirpur session of the National Conference held on the 9-10th April, 1943 Shaikh declared that “as Muslims, we must believe that India is our home. We have been born out of its earth and we will go to the same earth. Our blood is mixed with every particle of this earth. India is our motherland and it will remain our motherland. It is our duty to free our motherland and our homes from the slavery of the foreigners.”

The formation of the National Conference and its adaptation of the Congress ideology was not liked by the supporters of the Muslim League. Under the leadership of Mr Ashiq Hussain a new party, Muslim League, was formed with its headquarters at Zaina Kadal. Shaikh failed to adopt an impartial approach toward the Congress and the Muslim League, which he had assured at the time of the conversion of the Muslim Conference into the National Conference. Many prominent Muslims did not like Shaikh’s pro-Congress attitude. The unhappy Muslim leaders decided to revive the Muslim Conference and for this an important meeting was held in Srinagar on 10th October, 1940, which was attended by 12 political workers, and thus reviving the Muslim Conference. They owed their allegiance to All India Muslim League. Two important leaders, Professor Ishaque from Jammu and Professor Aziz from Srinagar.

also attended the historic Lahore session of the Muslim League, in which Pakistan resolution was passed. Mr Aziz was nominated a working member of the Muslim League. Particularly the Muslims of Jammu who did not enjoy the ‘same majority status’ which the Muslims of valley enjoyed, were “threatened by the prospect of being governed by a Hindu majority” and became “staunch supporters of the Revived the Muslim Conference.” Feeling uncomfortable with the pro-Congress orientation of the National Conference, Ghulam Abbas sought an explanation from Shaikh Abdullah. Abbas was not satisfied with the reply of Shaikh Abdullah and resigned from the National Conference. Many prominent workers, including six members of the legislative assembly, resigned from the National Conference. When, in September, 1940, the annual session of the National Conference was held in Baramulla, no Muslim delegates from the Jammu province except the Mirpur district attended. In contrast, large number of Hindus even from Jammu attended the session. This intervention from the British India complicated the politics of Kashmir in 1940s.

It was in this surcharging atmosphere that Chaudhri Ghulam Abbas Khan left the National Conference “on the charge that it was too cosy with the Congress” and joined Muslim Conference. Ghulam Abbas openly stated that “the Kashmir Muslim Conference is a part and parcel of the All India Muslim League.” The revival of the Muslim Conference supported by the educated section of the Muslims throughout the state “directly challenged Shaikh Abdullah’s position as the sole representative of the state of Jammu and Kashmir.” Their position was further strengthened by the joining of the Mirwaiz of Kashmir Yusuf Shah. The reaction of Shaikh Abdullah and his National Conference was indecent. The National Conference ‘descended to hooliganism’ and started a vicious campaign against the supporters of the Muslim Conference. Having an upper hand in media this propaganda had a

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5 Chitralekh Zutshi, Languages of Belonging Islam, Religion, Identity and the Making of Kashmir, Delhi, 2003, pp. 262-63
6 According to Bazaz, they were motivated by Ayyengar, the Prime Minister, who was pro-Congress and “Gandhista” at heart to ‘join the ranks of the National Conference in increasing numbers.” Prem Nath Bazaz, The History of Struggle For Freedom In Kashmir, Srinagar, 2003, pp. 177-178
8 Khalid, Srinagar, January 12, 1943.
‘lasting impact on the reputation of the Muslim Conference.’\textsuperscript{9} Shaikh himself was carrying a hockey stick in his hands to frighten his opponents. He even declared that “if to silence my opponents I have to take up a sword I will not hesitate to do so.”\textsuperscript{10} Shaikh Abdullah and his National Conference also unnecessarily criticized the All India Muslim League and its ‘ability in Kashmir.’ Although Muslim Conference had declared that “the Kashmir Muslim Conference is a part and parcel of the All-India Muslim League” but Muslim League and its ‘Pakistan scheme’ did not include Princely States, not even Muslim-majority Kashmir. It was much involved in strengthening its hold in Punjab and Bengal where it faced a tough resistance from regional parties.\textsuperscript{11}

Ironically, the reaction of the non-Muslims was not different from the earlier one. The majority of them were suspicious about the change. Only a microscopic minority of them considered it healthy development; but even then because of social pressure only few joined the NC. Shaikh Abdullah laments in his autobiography: “While on the one hand the educated Muslims did not appreciate our decision of conversion of the Muslim Conference into the National Conference, on the other hand the non-Muslims showed more disdain towards us. They wedded their vested interests with the rulers and considered Kashmir a Hindu state. Their rich and educated sections dominated them. As such they were not ready to support any such movement that would militate the interests of the rulers and their own vested interests. With great difficulty a few youths of the community joined the National Conference but they faced persistent pressures from their community; and they looked at any measure that was taken by us with suspicion.”\textsuperscript{12} Even those who joined the National Conference with few exceptions wanted to run National Conference as a local unit of Congress. Bazaz does not seem to be happy with this attitude of his community; “no step,” he writes, “was allowed by non-Muslim members to be taken and no decision adopted by the Conference unless and until it was strictly in consonance with the Congress philosophy and practice... This attitude...made the Muslim leaders uneasy but helpless... in trying to bring the National Conference under the hegemony of the Congress leaders, the Hindu and the Sikh members were not prompted by any burning

\textsuperscript{9} Prem Nath Bazaz, op. cit., pp. 184-85; Zutshi, op. cit., p. 263
\textsuperscript{10} Ibid., op. cit., pp. 185-86.
\textsuperscript{11} Zutshi, op. cit., pp. 264-65.
\textsuperscript{12}Shaikh Mohammad Abdullah, Aatish-i- Chinar, Srinagar, 2006. P. 245.
desire for freedom or even by the wish to secularism state politics. They only felt happy that by doing so they were helping the cause of Indian nationalism which, despite the statements of the Congress leaders to the contrary, was becoming another name for Hindu nationalism. Clearly it was the prompting of the communal mentality of the Hindus which was cleverly presented in a nationalist secular garb.”13 These non-Muslims up to then had served many Hindu communal organisations and it was only after the advice of Nehru that they had joined National Conference; so it was not expected from them that they would become nationalists at one stroke. They continued to ‘owe their allegiance to their communal organisations. The most vocal among them was the Hindu Rajya Sabha which advocated, publicly, the conversion of Muslims and the establishment of an orthodox Hindu Raj.14 The high command of National Conference was a divided house. While the Hindu members were actively pulling in one direction the Muslim members were vigorously pulling in the other. At every step strife ensued. It was feared that the National Conference might prove stillborn.”15

Realising that he was losing ground among the Muslims16 ‘without making a headway among the non-Muslims, Shaikh thought a novel plan to use religion. He arranged the celebration of the *Id-i-Milad* (the birth anniversary of the Prophet) and gave religious speeches in which he praised Islam. He also declared that he was a ‘Muslim first and a Muslim last.’17 At the same time in order to gain the sympathy of Hindus he invited Nehru to Kashmir. Nehru visited Kashmir in 1940. He toured Kashmir for ten days and advised the Hindus to join the National Conference to make a common cause for the establishment of responsible government.18 Nehru remained in Kashmir for 10 days and his meetings with non-Muslims helped National Conference to gain the Support of Hindus to some extent. Before Nehru’s visit, two prominent Pandit leaders, Pandit Kayshup Bandhu and Jai

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13 P.N. Bazaz, op. cit., pp. 167-68. Saraf, op. cit., pp 603-4
14 Saraf, op. cit., pp 603-4
15 Bazaz, op. cit., p. 168.
16 A police intelligence report from 1940 noted that “Shaikh Mohammad Abdullah is losing favour amongst the Muslims because of his nationalistic activities, which the majority feel to be detrimental to their interests.” Political Department B 206/1940, Jammu State Archives
18 Nehru advised the Pandits to join the movement, to strengthen the National Conference and Shaikh Abdullah. *Times of India*, June 11, 1940, ProQuest Historical Newspapers Times of India (1838-2001), p. 13; Saraf, op. cit., pp. 543-545.
Lal Killam, had resigned from National Conference on the grounds of Shaikh's religious tune.\textsuperscript{19} The Pandits resented the use of Islamic symbols by Shaikh Abdullah. They also opposed the celebrating of the Martyr's Day, the day where from the freedom struggle started; in their view it was an anti-Hindu movement and could not be celebrated as a national day.\textsuperscript{20} Later on Bazaz also left National Conference.Shaikh Abdullah was disillusioned and in a public meeting in Srinagar on 28 July, 1941, he lamented, "in a country like Kashmir where Kashmiri Pandits cannot even tolerate the construction of a bathroom by Muslims on the banks of Jhelum, what is the use of preaching nationalism? People who cannot even tolerate the washing of hands and face by us on the banks of Jhelum, surely, cannot be united with us."\textsuperscript{21} Thus Shaikh's decision to start a national movement on secular groans was received with cold shoulders.

His decision seems unidirectional. While as he did his best to persuade the Muslim leaders for the conversion of the Muslim Conference to National Conference, no or little was done to politicise Hindus about the nationalism. The result was that on the one hand he lost many prominent colleagues and on the other hand the non-Muslims did not join his new party. However, his strong bonds with Congress and his own towering personality and leadership saved Shaikh and his National Conference. Sheik did not snap his ties with the Indian National Congress because he was of the view that alliance with the Congress was essential to secure funds and publicity for the National Conference.\textsuperscript{22} The movement that was launched against the Maharaja had assumed now an all India character and that of an anti-British status.

At the same time Shaikh and his movement tried to collaborate with the Dogra Government. The National Conference in February 1943, on the pretext of the changing international situation due to the war, announced its "supreme desire to stand with solidarity in these hard times by [a]... ruler who has shown deep concern for the people."\textsuperscript{23} It "convinced many Kashmiris that Shaikh Abdullah was willing to go to any lengths to gain political power." Friendly relations were established with

\textsuperscript{19} Saraf., pp. 545-46
\textsuperscript{20} Ibid., pp. 545-467
\textsuperscript{21} Ibid., p. 547.
\textsuperscript{22} Bazaz, op. cit., p. 178.
\textsuperscript{23} The Hindustan Standard (Calcutta), 16 February, 1943, cited in Ian Copland, op. cit., p. 232.
Gopalswami Ayyengar, the Prime Minister of the State. Instead of holding by-
elections to fill the vacant seats in the assembly, the Prime Minister proposed that
since the National Conference was the “acknowledged popular” party, the NC’S
suggested candidates could be nominated by the special orders of the Maharaja to fill
the eight vacant elected seats in the assembly. These seats were falling vacant after
the resignation of eight elected members of National Conference over the script
controversy. The State Government had ordered the dual script- Devanagari and
Persian as medium of instruction in schools. The working committee of the National
Conference agreed readily the ‘undemocratic proposal.’

Due to war economy there was shortage of foodstuffs, firewood, kerosene etc
which created serious problems for the people. The National Conference involved
itself with the Government in the ‘distribution of essential commodities, particularly
rice, kerosene and fire wood. It was not unexpected that some of the National
Conference cadres “sucumbed to temptations.” The State Government set up a fuel
committee to supply fuel to the inhabitants of the hard hit areas. Gopalswami
Ayyengar who was a strong nationalist and supporter of Congress rewarded Shaikh
for this collaboration by appointing “NC members to the boards responsible for
issuing rice ration tickets and permits for fuel, and to the parliamentary committee set
up in 1943 to make proposals on constitutional reform, and instructed the police to let
its supporters demonstrate freely in the streets.” In 1944, following the adoption of
the committee’s recommendations for a limited system of diarchy, Mirza Afzal Beg
of National Conference and Ganga Ram, “an ultra- loyalist Dogra politician,” were
appointed by Hari Singh as his Public Works Minister and Home Minister
respectively. National Conference’s compliance with the Dogra state, for which it
was rewarded, alienated Kashmiris from the NC which they thought had weakened
the “freedom movement.” The common people who suffered heavily due to high
prices, shortages, and black-marketing towards the closing of the war took the
National Conference ‘as an arm of the Government and a defender of reaction.’

Writing in October 1943, after a shooting in which several demonstrators were killed

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24 For details see Hassnain, op. cit., pp. 104-105
25 Bazaz, op. cit., p. 186
29 Ibid., p. 217.
and dozens wounded in Jammu, the Resident declared that it seemed 'only a matter of
time before the restlessness already visible among the rank and file of Abdullah’s
followers resulted in massive desertions to the Muslim Conference.'\textsuperscript{30} Furthermore
the hard economic situation due to war disappointed the common people. Since NC
had associated itself with the Government, its image was damaged and popularity
diminished.\textsuperscript{31} Gopalaswami appointed Bakshi Ghalam Mohammad, an important
member of National Conference, as a member of the committee. There was hue and
cry from various sections of population which alleged that the committees had refused
to grain them because 'they were supporters of the Muslim Conference or followers
of Mirwaiz Yusuf Shah. Their ration cards were also cancelled. The press reported
that corruption was rampant at the depots and a big portion of the fuel went into black
market the profits of which were shared by the officials and non-officials alike.\textsuperscript{32} Thus
"[b]y 1943," writes Zutshi, "the National Conference[read Shaikh Abdullah] had
betrayed Kashmiris by not only subordinating their movement to the Congress, but,
more importantly, its collaboration with the Dogra State threatened to jeopardize the
very raison d’être of the movement."\textsuperscript{33} Voices of dissent were raised against the
National Conference. Shaikh Abdullah was asked to sever his links with the Congress
‘and choose the socialist path to address the issues facing Kashmiris.’ He was accused
of giving up economic and political reforms for gaining “political power and the
favour of Congress leaders.”\textsuperscript{34}

In order to recover its ebbing influence among Kashmiris, the National
Conference under the influence of some communists,\textsuperscript{35} came up with a
comprehensive plan of socio-economic reconstruction, called \textit{Naya Kashmir} or the
New Kashmir Manifesto in September 1944.\textsuperscript{36} N N Raina an eminent communist

\textsuperscript{30} Barton to Wylie, 12 October, 1943, IOR R/1/1/3913, cited in Ian Copland, op. cit., p. 233
\textsuperscript{31} Bazaz, op. cit., p. 217; Zutshi, op. cit., p. 293.
\textsuperscript{32} Bazaz, Freedom, op. cit., p. 187.
\textsuperscript{33} Chitrakatha Zutshi, op. Cit., p. 275
\textsuperscript{34} Zutshi, op. cit., p. 285.
\textsuperscript{35} Some important communists who worked in the National Conference and tried to influence its
thinking were G.M. Sadiq, P.N. Jalali, J.N. Zutshi, D.P. Dhar etc. From 1938 to 1950, the
Communists played a vital role in shaping the policies of the National Conference.
\textsuperscript{36} It is believed that it was written by an important Indian communist leader B.P.L. Bedi along with his
English wife Freda. After the transformation of the Muslim Conference into the National Conference,
the communists of British India visited valley in order to win the cadre. KM Ashraf, for example
visited the valley in 1940s. In 1942, N N Raina came back to his homeland for ‘political work. He
became an influential member of the left-wing in the National Conference. A study circle at Dal Gate
in Srinagar was set up by the communist activists “to propagate the philosophy of Marxism and
leader of National Conference stated that the manifesto 'was not produced in a high
tide of mass upsurge. On the contrary political activity in 1943-44 had fallen to its
lowest ebb when the document was published.' It was in pursuance of this manifesto
that after assuming power, National Conference under Shaikh Abdullah could
legislate some of the most radical land-reform legislations in a short period between
1948 and 1950; like land to tiller by the Big Landed Estates Act of 1950. In its
formation, 'the experiences of the Soviet Union were the main inspiration. In the
introduction of Naya Kashmir Manifesto, Shaikh Abdullah, for example wrote: "in
our times Soviet Russia had 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." The Naya Kashmir Manifesto was presented by Shaikh
Mohammad Abdullah before the open session of the National Conference at Srinagar
on 30 December 1944. Naya Kashmir plan can without any doubt be called as "[T]he
most important contribution of the National Conference towards the articulation and
channelization of Kashmiri popular aspiration." It is a (socialist) political document,
containing aims and objectives of the Jammu and Kashmir National
Conference, with respect to the future constitutional, framework, economic
planning, agricultural and industrial growth and socio-educational uplift of the
state. It in unambiguous terms explained the charters of peasants, workers and
women. N.N. Raina, claimed thus: "no sector of national movement in this
subcontinent, conceived of anything like this document. The Fundamental Rights
resolution of Karachi session of the Indian National Congress, or even the Lucknow
and Faizpur sessions respectively in 1936 and 1937, are miles behind in their
democratic content from the point of view of common people."
Naya Kashmir was divided into two parts—the Constitution of the State and the National Economic Plan. According to the proposed constitution of the state there would be a single citizenship to all inhabitants of Jammu, Kashmir, Ladakh and the Frontier Regions, including the Poonch and Chenani Ilaqas.\textsuperscript{40} It proposed the establishment of the National Assembly, elected by citizens of the state by electoral districts on the basis of one deputy per 40,000 population, for a period of five years. It advocated the establishment of councils for national education, cultural uplift, women's rights, communications and health to ensure the restructuring of all areas of the state. According to Naya Kashmir, there would be socialization of all instruments of production and the reorganization of property relationships. It declared that land belonged to the tiller and the landlord had no right over the land or the peasant.\textsuperscript{41} The plan envisaged the establishment of rule of law and equal protection of law for all citizens and recourse to quick, chief and impartial justice, the establishment of legislature to be elected on the basis of adult franchise, the establishment of peoples' courts in all districts and tehsils. With the high court at apex of the judiciary the right of women to elect and to be elected in all the institutions on the basis of equality with men, equal opportunity for all children, right to free education to all students, etc.\textsuperscript{42} The National Economic Plan envisaged a radically new rural economy. It suggested fundamental changes in prevailing land relationships. More specifically it proposed a system of planned economy ensuring the people a reasonable standard of living. Reorganization of agricultural relations with emphasis on the principle 'land to the tiller', establishment of cooperative associations for cultivators, peoples' control over forests, industries, banks, regulation of the price level and fixation of wage bill, etc. It further envisaged the setting up of various national council including those concerning with agriculture, public health, education and housing. To the plan were attached three charters, first for peasants, second for workers and third for women.

So far as the future of the state after the lapse of British rule in India was concerned the manifesto was ambiguous. However, the Maharaja was given promise that he would continue to exercise the right of general control over the administration of the state. It envisaged a political system based on the democratic principles of

\textsuperscript{40} New Kashmir, op. cit., p. 35; See also Hassnain, op. cit., p. 118.
\textsuperscript{41} For details see New Kashmir, op. cit., pp. 35-72.
\textsuperscript{42} Ibid.
Responsible Government with the elective principle applied from the local panchayats right up to legislative assembly. Even in his speech to the session which adopted the manifesto, Shaikh was ambiguous on this issue. He declared that “The all Jammu and Kashmir National Conference has always championed the cause of Hindu-Muslim unity, and at all times we have held that the biggest obstacle in the way of India’s freedom is the difference and distrust between the two great communities...our duty, along with that of our countrymen, was to support the move for unity.” He further linked the fate and future of Kashmir with the independence of India: “the independence of India is the essential prerequisite for the independence of the State peoples.”

The Naya Kashmir Manifesto was criticized by the Muslim Conference, Yuvak Sabha, the representative body of Kashmiri pandits, Bazaz, a socialist and even Lala Bansi Lal Suri, a prominent Gandhian member of the National Conference criticized it. Mirwaiz Yusuf Shah criticized it as un-Islamic. The Pandit community represented by the Kashmir Yuvak Sabha feared the dominance of Muslims in the plan. Bazaz, dismissed it as an “interesting though thoughtlessly drafted document, envisaging the establishment of a communist State yet, opportunistically enough, it guaranteed the perpetuation of the alien Dogra rule in Kashmir.” Lala Bansi Lal Suri resigned from the National Conference at the time of the introduction of the Manifesto. According to him the Manifesto was anti-national and pro Kashmir and pro-Muslim. In spite of this criticism, however, the Dogra Government was moved by the Naya Kashmir and announced plans for diarchy on October 2, 1945. According to this plan two ministerial posts were to be given to a Hindu and a Muslim who commanded the confidence of the State legislature. While the Muslim Conference boycotted this offer, the National Conference welcomed the offer.

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43 Cited in Hassnain, op. cit., p. 127.
44 The Tribune, Lahore, October 15, 1945.
46 Handard, Srinagar, May 9, 1945. Zutshi, op. cit.
47 According to N N Raina, the ‘Lahore Resolution’ passed by Muslim League in which a separate land for the Muslims was demanded. Kashmir was obviously a candidate for the Muslim majority grouping envisaged in the North-West. In order to save his rule in a Muslim majority State the Maharaja started negotiations with the leaders of National Conference through his new Prime Minister R C Kak, appointed in 1944 for the future of the State. The NC leaders were encouraged by the Maharaja to come with a document for the future. When the Maharaja returned from abroad in March 1943, he was welcomed by Sheikh Abdullah at Mujahid Manzil [headquarter of NC] and presented him the Manifesto a year before its publication. N N Raina, op. cit., p. 120.
The division of the Muslims of Kashmir was depressing the Muslim League at a time when its dream of Pakistan was coming true. Jinnah did his best to bring the two parties together and also paid a visit to Kashmir in 1944 nearly a decade after his second visit in 1936. He was given a royal welcome by both the Muslim Conference and National Conference leaders jointly. He held meetings with the Muslim Conference leaders and National Conference leaders particularly Shaikh Abdullah for a reconciliation and forming a single Muslim party.48 His appeal to the Muslims of Kashmir to join the Muslim Conference, which he declared the only representative body of Kashmiri Muslims, in the annual session of the Muslim Conference only increased anti-League feeling of Shaikh. Speaking at the annual session of the Muslim Conference on 17th June, 1944, Jinnah, declared, “I feel happy and confident that Muslims have now awakened and are united under the flag of the Muslim Conference..............Among the people who met me, 99 percent supported the Muslim Conference.”49 Shaikh Abdullah was upset and infuriated by the Jinnah’s declaration. He criticized Jinnah and even threatened him that “if Jinnah does not give up the habit of interfering in our politics it will be difficult for him to go back in an honourable manner.”50 Jinnah responded emphatically, “when I, after careful consideration, suggested that Mussalmans should organize themselves under one flag and on one platform, not only my advice was not acceptable to Shaikh Abdullah but, he indulged in all sorts of language of a most offensive and vituperative character in attacking me. My advice to the Musalmans that the differences can only be resolved by argument, discussion, exchange of views, and reasons, and not by goondaism and one thing that I must draw the attention of the Kashmir Government about is that goondaism must be put down at any cost, and there should be a constitutional liberty of speech and freedom of thought, which is the elementary right of every citizen under any civilized form of government.” 51 Although the Muslims of Kashmir were more inclined towards NC but in the Indian context they were supporters of Jinnah

48 For details see Saraf, op. cit., pp. 622-628.
49 Saraf, op. cit., p. 629.
50 Bazaz, op. cit., p. 205.
51 Cited in ibid., pp. 206-207.
and Muslim League not the Congress. They had accepted Jinnah as the leader of the Muslims "beyond the valley."\(^52\)

Shaikh responded by inviting top leaders of the Congress and the States People’s Conference to the National Conference’s Sopore session in 1945. The important leaders of Congress and State Peoples Conference who reached Kashmir following the invitation included, Jawaharlal Nehru, Moulana Abu-ul-Kalam Azad, Khan Abdul Gaffer Khan, Mian Iftiqr-ud-Din, Jai Narayan Vayas, Asaf Ali and Kanya Lal Vaidya.\(^53\) It was reiterated that National Conference was determined to bring the political movement in Kashmir even closer to India. In a speech in honour of Moulana Azad in Hazuri Bagh, Srinagar, Shaikh declared that “our future and our fate is connected with the freedom struggle of India......the National Conference has accepted the principle of self-determination for all communities.”\(^54\) However, there was a huge gap between Shaikh’s thought and practice. Although he claimed NC as the sole representative of all Kashmiris, but he was never willing to “accommodate political and ideological differences from within and without its ranks.” Rather he resorted to ‘emotional and physical violence against his opponents.\(^55\) Nehru advised the pandits to join National Conference which he believed represented the majority of Kashmiris. He appealed them that “if they wanted to live in Kashmir, they should join the National Conference, or bid goodbye to their country.”\(^56\) It served two purposes.

First to strengthen the position of Shaikh Abdullah who was facing a serious challenge from the Muslim Conference backed by Muslim League. Second strengthening the position of Shaikh backed by Congress would help in making Kashmir a part of independent India. Nehru was not ambiguous about it. In a speech he declared that “the question of the independence of Kashmir is linked to the independence of India. Kashmir cannot make its one-half inch mosque by staying independent........inevitably this mulk [Kashmir] will have to stay connected to Hindustan.”\(^57\)

\(^{52}\) Zutshi, op. cit., p. 303. For example on the eve of the visit of Jinnah even the strong men of NC could be seen in the welcome reception and other functions, see Ian Copland, op. cit., pp. 230-231.

\(^{53}\) Hassnain, op. cit., p. 130.

\(^{54}\) Cited in Hassnain, op. cit., p. 130-31.

\(^{55}\) Zutshi, op. cit., p. 294; Saraf, op. cit., pp 649-50.


\(^{57}\) *Hamdard*, Srinagar, August 6, 1945.
However, Shaikh did not succeed in using Nehru's influence to recover his position. That is why he now started direct negotiations with the leaders of Muslim Conference. In this regard a secret meeting was held on 28 March at Jammu between the two parties. The meeting was attended by Chaudhri Ghulam Abbas the president of the Muslim Conference, Afzal Beg, Khawaja G.M. Sadiq, Maulana Syed and Shaikh Abdullah of the National Conference. There was possibility of amalgamation of National Conference with the Muslim Conference; but “no decision was reached” because of the “the rivalry between Chaudhri Ghulam Abbas and Shaikh Mohammad Abdullah for the leadership of the proposed new party which if formed is expected to ally itself with the Muslim League.”

Meanwhile the political situation in British India was changing as fast as the weather of Kashmir. On 12 May 1946, the Cabinet Mission sent to India declared that when the British left India, its Paramountcy would lapse and the rights of Princely States would return to them. This announcement of an imminent independent Dogra State of Jammu and Kashmir sent Abdullah into a ‘flurry of political alliance-making.’ In a telegram to the members of the British cabinet mission, Shaikh wrote, “we declare to world that this sale deed [Treaty of Amritsar, 1846] confers no privileges equitant to those claimed by states governed by treaty rights. As such case of Kashmir stands on unique footing and people of Kashmir press on Mission their unchallengeable claims to freedom on withdrawal of British power from India. We wish to declare that no sale deed however, sacrosanct can condemn more than four million men and women to servitude of an autocrat when will to live under this rule is no longer there. People of Kashmir are determined to mould their own destiny and we appeal to Mission to recognise justice and strength of our cause.”

In a tough message sent to the Cabinet Mission, Shaikh Abdullah wrote, “today the national demand of the people of Kashmir is not merely the establishment of Responsible Government, but their right to absolute freedom from autocratic rule. The immensity of the wrong done to our people by the ‘Sale Deed’ of 1846 can only be judged by

58 "Fortnightly Report of the Kashmir Residency for the Fortnight Ending the 15th April 1946," Political Department, File No. 5(S)-P(S)/46, National Archives of India [NAI].

59 The telegram sent by Shaikh Mohammad Abdullah, president all Jammu and Kashmir National Conference, to the members of the British cabinet mission, while they were in Srinagar, cited in State Versus Shaikh Abdullah, Kashmir On Trial, with an introduction by Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru, Lion Press, Lahore 1947, p. 224.
looking into the actual living conditions of the people. It is the depth of our torment that has given strength to our protest.\textsuperscript{60}

In order to prevent the Maharaja from continuing his rule after the lapse of the British rule, and also to regain his popularity\textsuperscript{61} Shaikh launched ‘Quit Kashmir Movement,’ declaring the Amritsar Treaty of 1846, ‘a sale deed’ and so asked the Dogras to leave.\textsuperscript{62} In particular he attacked the ‘Treaty of Amritsar’ by which Kashmiris were sold as slaves. He exhorted the people “to be prepared for “bullets and guns” and to use slogans such as “Quit Kashmir”, “Break the Amritsar Treaty,” etc.\textsuperscript{63} Shaikh in a tough language said, “I announce it to the world that the descendents of Gulab Singh have no right to rule this land. We were not even told at that time when the British sold this land to him. Now, when the British have to quit India, we tell Hari Singh to quit Kashmir. We will collect fifty lakhs by contribution and tell him to vacate this land.”\textsuperscript{64} He attacked the first ruler of Dogra dynasty for betraying the Sikhs, as well as the British who had sold Kashmir, to him, as dacoits. Shaikh Abdullah and other important leaders of National Conference were arrested on 20 and 21 May.\textsuperscript{65} On the one hand he asked the Dogras to leave Kashmir and on the other hand sought the support of Kashmiri Pandits for the ‘national struggle of Kashmir.’ In a speech he stressed that “those Hindus who...[believed] that Dogra rule should remain, should....[not] forget that... Kashmiris [were treated] as a bought up race without distinction of religion.\textsuperscript{66} The non-Muslims did not support his Quit Kashmir Movement. They were not willing to accept Hari Singh as an autocrat. Most of the non-Muslim leaders particularly from Jammu, who would identify themselves with Dogra state, were threatened by the


\textsuperscript{61} the resident in his fortnightly report in February 1946 to the secretary of state reported that National Conference “is gradually losing ground and numbers of its supporters and[sic.]read are] deserting the party and joining the Muslim Conference.” Fortnightly Report of the Kashmir Residency for the fortnight ending the 28\textsuperscript{th} February 1946, File No. 5(S)-P(S)46, Political Department, NAI, see also Josef Korbel, Danger in Kashmir, Srinagar, 2008, p. 20.

\textsuperscript{62}The Hindustan Times, 24 may 1946, press cutting on Quit Kashmir Movement, Department of Information, Srinagar.

\textsuperscript{63} Fortnightly Report of the Kashmir Residency For the Fortnight Ending the 15\textsuperscript{th} May 1946, [Confidential], File No. 5(S)-P(S)46, Political Department, NAI.

\textsuperscript{64} The Complaints Submitted Against Shaikh, cited in Sato Versus Shaikh Abdullah, op. cit., pp. 16-19.

\textsuperscript{65} Fortnightly Report Of The Kashmir Residency For The Fortnight Ending the 31\textsuperscript{st} May 1946.NAI.

\textsuperscript{66}Daily Herald, 26 May 1946, press cuttings on the Quit Kashmir movement, Department of Information, Srinagar.
call of Quit Kashmir Movement. They feared that in due course all powers would transfer into the hands of Muslims. However, some Pandits supported his Quit Kashmir call with caution and realization 'that his efforts in due course would transfer all political power into the hands of the state Muslims.' During this agitation the Pandits had been rallying their forces in support of the Maharaja. Numerous telegrams were despatched to the, Hindu newspapers and Congress leaders, condemning the agitation and endeavouring them to present a "more accurate picture of the situation to the people of British India." Some of these communications had been inspired by the state authorities but mostly these were spontaneous on the part of Pandits. The Muslim Conference declined to be drawn into the agitation and its leaders were pleased that the Government had dealt with Shaikh and his supporters so firmly. The Muslim Conference declared that "the agitation had been started at the behest of Congress leaders......to restore the lost prestige of the Nationalists."70

Shaikh Abdullah launched the 'Quit Kashmir' movement at a time when negotiations were in progress between Muslim Conference and National Conference for amalgamation. The agitation derailed the negotiations. Nehru and his Congress who had supported Shaikh from many years could not tolerate this negotiation. The response of the state was ruthless and the agitation was forcibly crushed. In an interview with the Hindustan Times, R.C. Kak, the Prime Minister of the Maharaja, said, "We have been preparing for it eleven months and now we are ready to meet the challenge. There will be no more vacillation and no weak-kneed policy. We shall be ruthlessly firm and we make no apology about it."71 Surprisingly after launching the 'Quit Kashmir movement' Shaikh Abdullah made his mind to leave Kashmir for Delhi to have meeting with Nehru who had invited him to Delhi. But he was arrested at Ghari on his way to Rawalpindi en route to Delhi. The time this news reached Srinagar, all members of the working committee and leading workers of the National Conference had been arrested.72 The agitation came as a bolt from the blue to Nehru. Nehru along with Dewan Chaman Lal, Asaf Ali, Baldev Sahai, Tajammal Hussain of the Indian National Army and several others left for Kashmir and was arrested on 20th

67 Eastern Times, 30 May, 1996, Information Department cuttings, Srinagar.
68 Fortnightly Report of the Kashmir Residency For the Fortnight Ending the 31st May 1946.NAI.
69 Fortnightly Report Of The Kashmir Residency For the Fortnight Ending the 31st May 1946. NAI.
71 Hindustan Times, 27 May 1946.
72 Times of India, May 23, 1946; ProQuest Historical Newspapers Times of India (1838-2001), p. 5.
June at Domel. Maulana Azad, the then president of the Congress asked him to come back in order to continue the “valuable work he was doing for the Congress in connection with the negotiations with the Cabinet Mission. Nehru willingly returned” though not without misgivings.”73 Nehru in a meeting with Rajani Palme Dutt, leading British communist, correspondent of London “Daily Worker,” in Rawalpindi told him that “the object of his mission to Kashmir was to stop the agitation and secure the release of Shaikh Abdullah and others as neither Congress nor the States Peoples Conference was prepared to launch drastic offensive against Kashmir or the many other states which deserved it.”74 However, if Shaikh had expected that Congress would support his movement he was soon proved wrong. The Congress offered only “lukewarm support” to his agitation because it “directly challenged the policy of the All India States Peoples’ Conference, which was to achieve popular government in the states under the aegis of the Maharajas of the states.”75 Most Congressmen from a religious and sentimental point of view had regretted the attack on a Hindu ruler.76 Acharya Kripalani, the Congress President declared that the Quit Kashmir demand was “unjust and unreasonable” for the Maharaja was the son of the soil who had purchased Kashmir and did not take it through “bloodshed and treachery.” He advised the people to give up Quit Kashmir slogan and instead demand “Panchayat Raj” which he described as “People’s Government under the aegis of the Maharaja.”77 In a meeting of the ‘All India States Subjects Conference, Patel advised strongly that “no agitation against individual states should be launched or pursued, rather the princes and states problems should be dealt as a whole.”78 Shaikh too was not happy with the attitude of the Congress. Shaikh conveyed this to Rajani Palme Dutt in an interview in the latter half of July 1946.”79 While as Congress leaders, Mr. Asif Ali, Ghaffar Khan, and Nehru came to Kashmir, Rama Chandra Kak, the Prime

73 Resolution of the Congress Working Committee 25 Sep. 1946, Letter from Vallabhbhai Patel to R.C. Kak, Political Department, 28-9-46, D. 6686-P/46, NAI.
74 Disturbances in Srinagar, Kashmir State, Intelligence Bureau Home Department, 9-8-46, File No. 167-P(S)/46, Political Department, NAI.
75 Zutshi, op. cit., p. 297.
76 Intelligence Bureau, Home Department, Extracts From the Punjab CID Abstract of Intelligence No. 22, Dated the 8th June, 1946. File No. 167-P(S)/46, Political Department, Disturbances in Srinagar, Kashmir State, NAI.
77 Times of India, May 26, 1947, p. 8.
78 Reference: Confidential Telegram No. 68, From Resident in Kashmir to Secy. Political Department by G.E.B. Abell, 17-6-46, Political Department, NAI.
79 “Disturbances in Srinagar, Kashmir State... During the Trial of Shaikh Abdullah, Intelligence Bureau Home Department,9-8-46 File No. 167-P(S)/46, Political Department, NAI.
Minister of the Maharaja visited Bombay and met there with Gandhi and Sardar Patel. Gandhi succeeded in persuaded Kak to lift ban on Nehru’s entry to Kashmir. Nehru therefore again visited Kashmir on 24 July 1946. His visit was more concerned with the transfer of National Conference into a definite branch of Congress, because speculations of merger of National Conference with Muslim Conference had alarmed him. Rumours ran high that Mujahid Manzil, the National Conference office, would be handed over to the Congress and that the Congress flag would be flown over the building. Shaikh Abdullah was trialled for his three speeches and was convicted under section 124(A) and sentenced to “three years simple imprisonment with fine of rupees five hundred on each score.”

Ghulam Abbas who was arrested after a ‘campaign of action’ similar to Jinnah’s in British India, was also held in the same jail where his archival rival Shaikh Abdullah was held. According to Josef Korbel who met them separately in 1948 that the two leaders discussed in ‘many night-long conversations------in prison the possibility of a reconciliation and resumption of the common struggle. “Both leaders recounted these conversations with feelings of sadness and nostalgia. They seemed to share the belief that the split in “1939 had been the beginning of all their troubles.” But this reconciliation never took place. Even though they were sincere and serious about the reconciliation but the factors that were to shape the future of Indian subcontinent and Kashmir were beyond the control of Shaikh Abdullah and Ghulam Abbas.

On the eve of partition of India, because of its strong socialist programme and message, and charismatic leadership of Shaikh, National Conference was the dominant party in Kashmir if not in Jammu. The Congress leaders who visited Kashmir advised non-Muslims to join National Conference which was the ‘nationalist and secular party.’ Muslim Conference was facing internal crisis and failed to fill the void left by the National Conference. The Government had successfully crushed the

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80 Fortnightly Report of the Kashmir Residency for the Fortnight Ending the 30th June 1946. NAI.  
81 Letter From Raj Bahadur R.C. Kak, Prime Minister to Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel, Dated 12th September 1946 Political Department, No. F. 13-C/46, F.167-P(S)/46, S97K-P(S)/46 NAI.  
82 Fortnightly Report of the Kashmir Residency For the Fortnight Ending the 16th August 1946. NAI.  
84 Korbel, op. cit., p. 21.  
85 Ibid., p. 22.
'Quit Kashmir' agitation and most of the nationalists were imprisoned. Chaudhri Ghulam Abbas, the president of the All- Jammu and Kashmir Muslim Conference, Agha Shaukat Ali, general secretary, Moulvi Nooruddin, president of the committee of action and Mr Allarakha Sagar, a prominent leader of the Conference, were arrested on 25th October 1946 by the Government for objectionable speech and agitation against an order banning the annual session of the Muslim Conference. Following Ghulam Abbas' arrest a dispute broke out between Mirwaiz and Hamidullah over the presidency. The squabbles among the leaders of the Muslim Conference had weakened the party and it was unlikely to be in a position to give National Conference a serious trouble in valley. However, compared to 1942, the Muslim Conference was 'immeasurably stronger particularly in Jammu division because of the considerable support of the professional classes and students who were enthused with the idea of Pakistan. In the January 1947 Assembly elections which were boycotted by National Conference, and when all the Muslim Conference top leaders were behind bars, the Muslim Conference won sixteen Muslim seats out of twenty-one; five out of six seats in Poonch and Jammu. The polling of 30 per cent in the harsh winter when the snow-clogged roads made it impossible for people to come out of their homes was claimed by the Muslim Conference "as a smashing victory and that the National Conference's appeal for a boycott had been largely ignored."

The year 1947 is a turning point in the modern history of Indian subcontinent. Zutshi, a modern researcher on Kashmir does not consider 1947 a turning point in the history of Kashmir. "I look," writes Zutshi, "at 1947 not so much as a turning point in the history of Kashmir, but instead as a significant year in the evolving narrative of Kashmiri political culture. During this year, in the context of the momentous changes taking place, the debates over regionalism, religious affiliations, sovereignty, and the legitimacy of both the Dogra state and the National Conference were articulated even more vigorously than in earlier years." So far as the fate of the Princely States was concerned the Cabinet Mission on 12th May 1946 had declared the 'possibility of

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86 The Statesman, 27 Oct. 1946, D. 6834-P/46, NAI.
87 "Appreciation Of The Position Resulting From The Arrest Of The Muslim Conference Leaders on 25th Oct. 1946, D. 274-P(C)/46, Political Department, NAI.
88 Ian Copland, Abdullah Factor, op. cit., p. 236.
89 The Dawn, 15 January 1947.
90 Korbel, op. cit., p. 22.
91 Zutshi, op. cit., p. 299.
political fragmentation in the subcontinent by declaring: "... his majesty's government will cease to exercise the powers of Paramountcy. This means that the rights of the States which flow from their relationship to the Crown will no longer exist and that all the rights surrendered by the States to the Paramount power will return to the States." Later on Mountbatten's plan of 3rd June 1947 reaffirmed this view: "His Majesty's Government wish to make it clear that... their policy towards Indian States contained in the Cabinet Mission Memorandum.....remains unchanged." Furthermore the Princely States were given legally full freedom to decide their future by the Indian Independence act of July 18, 1947, the act which provided the legal basis for the transfer of power from the British to the successor's Government of India and Pakistan. They were to accede to either India or Pakistan or to remain as independent entities. While as the Muslim League declared that the Princely States were free to "join the Hindustan Constituent Assembly, or the Pakistan Constituent Assembly, or decide to remain independent." The Congress was reluctant to give this type of freedom to them, because the majority of the Princely States were 'located in that part of the Subcontinent which was to form the Indian Union.'92 Thus to prevent the apparent 'balkanization', of the Subcontinent and to stabilize the relations between the Dominions and the Princely States, a 'Ministry of States' under Sardar Patel was established in India. Because of this effort of the Congress, majority of the states acceded to India.

By August 15, 1947, all the Princely States except three [Hyderabad, Kashmir and Junagar] had acceded to either India or Pakistan. The Maharaja of Kashmir was totally in dilemma about the future of his kingdom. He had not good relations with Nehru because of latter's frequent interventions in the internal affairs of Kashmir 'by coming to the assistance of Shaikh Abdullah.'93 Also, because of the 'heavy-handed measures by his administration staffed chiefly with royal kinsmen, court favourites, and Hindus from outside the State, his Muslim subjects who formed the majority of his State were not happy with him. So he had no hope of surviving his kingdom in a Muslim country, Pakistan.94 However, the mass violence and 'an unprecedented exchange of population' in the Punjab, forced the Maharaja to come to

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94 Alice Thornier, op. cit., p. 19.
some understanding with the successors of the British paramount authorities, India and Pakistan. On 12 August 1947 the Maharaja announced his willingness to negotiate Standstill Agreements with both India and Pakistan, to ensure that old arrangements of trade, communications and services continued with what that had hitherto been British India. 95 Three days later, on 15th August 1947, Pakistan signed the agreement but India "neither accepted nor rejected" the agreement. India argued that such an agreement needed full discussion with an official of the state Government. No such discussion ever took place on the matter. With the result no standstill agreement was reached between India and the Kashmir Government. 96

However, it seemed from the events that followed that India did not want a temporary agreement with the Maharaja but a permanent one. The Indian leaders were no means; reconciled to the prospect of Kashmir’s inclusion in Pakistan. Since it borders on Afghanistan, sovet Tadzhikistan, Sinkiang, and Tibet, Kashmir was conceived as both a gateway to greater Indian influence in Central Asia and a bastion of defence. 97 In addition the Congress, particularly, Nehru could use ‘Kashmir as a living demonstration that a distinctively Muslim community would survive and prosper in the secular atmosphere of the new India’. 98 To persuade the Maharaja of Kashmir to accede to India, many prominent Congress leaders visited valley. 99 In May 1947, Acharya Kriplani, the President of the Congress visited Kashmir. In order to woo the Maharaja, as said earlier, he criticized the Quit Kashmir movement as an absurd demand on part of Shaikh Abdullah to ask the Maharaja to leave. The rulers of Patiala and Kaparthala States, who had acceded to India, also visited Kashmir in that connection. 100 Then the most important of all, was the visit of Mahatma Gandhi. 101 Gandhi visited Kashmir in the beginning of August 1947 ‘to strike to deal with the Maharaja.’ Bazaz in a sarcastic way writes, “the apostle of truth announced before departure for Delhi that his tour was absolutely non-political and under taken simply as a formality to redeem a thirty- years old promise made to last Maharaja Pratap

95 Lamb, op. cit., p. 121.
96 Michael Brecher, op. cit., p. 23; lamb, op. cit., p. 122.
97 Alice Thornier, op. cit., p. 18.
98 Ibid.
99 The purpose of these visits was to devise ‘some formula whereby the Maharaja could join independent India.’ Lamb, Crisis in Kashmir, 1947 to 1966, London, 1966, p. 41.
100 Ibid.
101 From the very beginning Gandhi was posted with up-to-date information regarding Kashmir affairs. Tribune, 25 January 1947.
Singh at the Kumbh Mela in 1919. But soon after the Mahatma return[ed] the real nature of the tour became evident.”102 The most important event that was followed after the visit of Gandhi in Kashmir was the dismissal of the Prime Minister of Kashmir, Pandit R.C. Kak, who was the staunch supporter of an independent Kashmir; and ‘was widely suspected of favouring some kind of rapprochement with Pakistan’ to succeed in his mission.103 He was replaced by Janak Singh and then Mehar Chand Mahajan.

Another important development was the release of Shaikh Abdullah. The Maharaja was advised to release Shaikh Abdullah, the friend of Nehru to give accession a ‘legal’ colour. In fact, even before the appointment of Mahajan, the Maharaja had engaged his Deputy Prime Minister, R.L. Batra to negotiate with Shaikh Abdullah, then still in prison. Alastair Lamb thinks that the “the kind of terms” of the negotiation was to “secure Shaikh Abdullah’s freedom in exchange for his collaboration with the Maharaja’s Government over the accession question.”104 Nehru was aware that Pakistan would not like to lose Kashmir and would adopt all measures towards that end. To tackle the situation, the release of Shaikh was necessary. In a letter to Patel on 27th September 1947, Nehru gave vent to his apprehensions. “it is obvious to me from the many reports I have received that the situation there in (Kashmir) is a dangerous and deterioration one... I understand that the Pakistan strategy is to infiltrate into Kashmir now and to take some high action as soon as Kashmir is more or less isolated because of the coming winter” Realising that the Maharaja being a Hindu would face difficulty to meet the situation in a region where the Muslims formed the majority, Nehru advised him that “the Maharaja should make friends with the National Conference so that there might be this popular, support against Pakistan... We have definitely a great asset in the National Conference provided it is properly handed. It would be pity to lose this. Shaikh Abdullah has repeatedly given assurance of wishing to cooperate and of being opposed to Pakistan; also to abide by my advice. I would again add time is the essence of the business and things must be done in a way so as to bring about the accession of Kashmir to the

103 Lamb, Crisis in Kashmir, op. cit., 1966, p. 42.
104 Lamb, Disputed Legacy, op. cit., p. 129.
Indian union as rapidly as possible with the cooperation of Shaikh Abdullah.”

The message was clear that the Maharaja should release Shaikh. Besieged from all sides the Maharaja made his mind to release Shaikh but not before securing an undertaking of loyalty to the Maharaja from Shaikh. Consequently Shaikh was released on 29 September 1947 after he assured the Maharaja his loyalty and the support of his organization. In a letter to the Maharaja on 26 September 1947, he wrote, “... I assure your highness the fullest and loyal support of myself and my organization. Not only this but I assure your highness that any party, within or without the state which may attempt to create any impediments in our efforts to gain our goal, will be treated as our enemy and will be treated as such.”

Thus Shaikh, who just a year before had asked the Maharaja to quit Kashmir, became his “most obedient subject.”

If Nehru, Gandhi and others pressed for the release of Shaikh it was because they considered Shaikh Abdullah “a congressman in everything but name- a democratic socialist, an arch-enemy of communalism, and a personal friend of that most secular of Indian politics [sic], Jawaharlal Nehru.”

The events that followed in Kashmir after the release of Shaikh make it to believe many that his release was purchased by Congress for accession to India. “In quick”, writes Alice thornier, “succession all voices in Kashmir pleading for accession to Pakistan were silenced: newspapers were censored or shut down, journalists were interned ... to prevent further criticism of the state Government.”

Neither such negotiations were held with Ghulam Abbas nor was he released although charges against him were less severe. Shaikh had been sentenced nine years imprisonment. Possibly, Shaikh was the only political leader ‘in the State who could head a popular administration inclined towards India.’ In a very few weeks suspicious began to be voiced in Pakistan that the Maharaja of Kashmir did not intend

106 For full text see Karan Singh, Heir Apparent, pp. 81-82.
107 See ibid.
108 Ian Copland, Abdullah Factor, op. cit., p. 240.
109 who was an analyst on India for the U.S Foreign Broadcast Intelligence Service during the second world war and had interviewed Nehru, Jinnah, Patel, Shaikh and other leading political figures during 1945-46.
110 Alice Thornier, op. cit., p. 21.
111 Alastair Lamb, Crisis In Kashmir, op. cit., p. 42
to remain neutral, but was, in fact, negotiating secretly with the object of eventual accession to the Indian Dominion.\textsuperscript{112}

But after his release, sensing the mood of the people, Shaikh adopted a different approach. The Muslims of Jammu region were inclined towards Pakistan. In Kashmir, where Shaikh had an unprecedented support of the people, the Muslims acknowledged him as the leader ‘up to Kohala,’ [boundary line Kashmir and Punjab] but beyond that their leader was Jinnah. Those who lived through those years and have survived to us report that ‘it was a common sight for followers of both the Muslim Conference and National Conference, and other parties in Srinagar, to have photographs of Shaikh Abdullah, Jinnah and Mohammad Iqbal hang side by side on the walls of their shops and homes.’\textsuperscript{113} Mehjoor who is called the poet of Kashmir and was held high esteem by the nationalists composed an exciting poem in October 1947, beginning with a line, “though I would like to sacrifice my life and body for India yet my heart is in Pakistan.” Not only was he arrested and imprisoned but his poem banned and destroyed. The poem itself cannot be located in Indian part of Kashmir.\textsuperscript{114} Shaikh was not ignorant of it. So after his release he remained ‘ambiguous about the accession of Kashmir.’ In one of his speeches after his release, he demanded ‘responsible government’ and popularised the slogan “Freedom Before Accession.”...... “Our first demand is complete transfer of power to the people in Kashmir. Representatives of the people in a democratic Kashmir will then decide whether the State should join India or Pakistan. If the forty lakhs of people living in Jammu and Kashmir are by passed and the state declares its accession to India or Pakistan, I shall raise the banner of revolt.”\textsuperscript{115} Shaikh’s release had made Pakistan apprehensive and suspicious. Realising the importance of Shaikh and also to prevent him from making any negotiation with the Indian leaders a delegation of Pakistan comprised of Mian Iftikhar-ud-din, Brigader Habib-ur Rehman, Dr Mohammad Din Tasir and Shaikh Hassan reached Srinagar to reach on an agreement with Shaikh regarding Kashmir’s accession to Pakistan. But Shaikh was not in hurry and wanted

\textsuperscript{112} Alice Thornier, op. cit., p. 20.
\textsuperscript{113} Saraf, Vol.1 op. cit., p. 665; Zutshi, op. cit., p. 303.
\textsuperscript{114} Cited in Bazzaz, Freedom, op. cit., p. 295.
time "to put out the fire and restore peace." To clear the apprehensions of Pakistan, Shaikh assured the delegation that "neither the friendship of Pandit Nehru of Congress nor their support of our freedom movement would have any influence upon our decision if we fell that the interests of four million Kashmiris lay in our accession to Pakistan." Abdullah also agreed to send two of his colleagues, Sadiq and Bakshi to Pakistan to discuss with the leaders of Pakistan. Shaikh himself left for Delhi. Bakshi G.M later on revealed that the Pakistani leaders were "unwilling to support any proposal for a popular poll on accession in Kashmir unless the National Conference was privately pledged to vote solidly for Pakistan." India itself was not certain about the mood of Shaikh particularly after the massacre of Muslims. M K Singh the Deputy Director of Intelligence Bureau of India in an un-official note on 26 October, 1947 recorded: "the attitude of Shaikh Mohd. Abdullah, who has recently visited Delhi, is not quite clear. The killing of Muslims that he has witnessed ... has no doubt left a bitter taste in his mouth."

Pakistan doubted the intention of Shaikh. Although Shaikh had popularised the slogan, 'responsible government before accession,' but at many occasions he ruled out accession to Pakistan. In one of a meeting speaking at a gathering of 100, 000 people at Hazuribagh, in Srinagar, on 5 October, he declared: "Of course, we will naturally opt to that dominion where our own demand for freedom receives recognition and support.... we cannot desire to join those [in Pakistan] who say that the people must have no voice in the matter. We shall be cut to pieces before we allow alliance between this State and people of this type........in Kashmir we want a people's government. We want a government which will give equal rights and equal opportunities to all men irrespective of caste and creed. The Kashmir government will not be the government of any one community. It will be a joint government of the Hindus, the Sikhs and the Muslims. That is what I am fighting for." Early on in a speech on 2 October, he vehemently criticized the 'two nation theory.' "In Kashmir," he declared, "we will not allow the spreading of this poisonous 'two nation

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117 M, Brecher, op. cit., p. 35.
theory'...... the creation of Pakistan has rendered Muslims of Madras, Bombay, Uttar Pradesh, Jullundhar, Delhi and Eastern Punjab homeless. These Muslims know where their shoes pinch."\(^{121}\) The Pakistan press and leaders attacked Shaikh Abdullah and his National Conference for their "unholy alliance" with the Maharaja.\(^{122}\) When Shaikh went to Delhi after sending his two colleagues to Lahore, there he 'reaffirmed his policy against joining Pakistan.'\(^{123}\) Speaking in New Delhi on 21st October, 1947, Shaikh Abdullah declared, "we will never allow Pakistan to coerce us......the Government of Indian Dominion and the people appreciate our view. They are giving sympathetic consideration to our problems. But that has not been the case in Pakistan.'\(^{124}\)

Shaikh was making these anti-Pak statement because he believed rather he was made to believe by Indian leaders that Pakistan although created would not survive. On the eve of partition it was the belief of many observers that Pakistan was not a viable concept. "It seemed inevitable that the new Islamic State would collapse, and the resultant chaos, if allowed to extend to Kashmir and the strategic mountain borderlands, would provide an almost irresistible temptation for Soviet meddling." A number of Indian politicians even from new formed cabinet not only hoped this collapse but 'were prepared to take active steps to bring it about.' Sir Claude Auchinleck, who commanded the Indian army on the eve of partition and transfer of power, in a secret note to his superiors in London wrote on 28 September 1947[a day before Shaikh was released], "I have no hesitation whatever in affirming that the present Indian cabinet are implacably determined to do all-in their power to prevent the establishment of the Dominion of Pakistan on a firm basis. In this I am supported by the unanimous opinion of my senior officers, and indeed by all responsible British officers cognizant of the situation."\(^{125}\)

However, 'the lull in Kashmir was broken in the spring of 1947' when an open revolt broke out in Poonch an area in north-western Jammu sandwiched between the Kashmir Valley to the east and Rawalpindi division of north-western Punjab to the

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\(^{121}\) Ibid., p. 17.


\(^{123}\) Josef Korbel, Danger In Kashmir, op. cit., pp. 69-70.

\(^{124}\) Dewan Ram Parkash, Fight For Kashmir, Foreword by Shaikh Abdullah, New Delhi, 1948. p. 273.

west.126 The Muslim majority areas of Jammu division were greatly influenced by the Muslim Leagues ideology.127 They were ‘influenced by rumours that the Maharaja intended to accede to India’; and to prevent it they started a ‘revolutionary movement.’128 The army sent there to suppress the revolt forbid them from observing Pakistan day. They became restless and a revolt was started by them in the second week of August, called “Poonch revolt” against the Maharaja and the raja of Poonch which spread to other parts.129 The Dogra army in order to ‘assert the Maharaja’s rule “wantonly plundered whole areas inhabited by Muslims and set fire to their homes……more and more platoons of the Dogra regiments were drafted to crush the Muslims into submission. This started a small battle in that part of the country. The Government started to massacre people without letting the world know what it was doing.”130 The revolt was given a good lead by Sardar Mohammad Ibrahim Khan, a lawyer and landowner, who was a Muslim Conference member of the Jammu and Kashmir Legislature. He transformed and directed it towards Poonch liberation movement.131 Shaikh Abdullah who was in Delhi confirmed in his two statements through ‘Associated Press of India that the Poonghis were in open revolt against the Maharaja. Although he was sympathetic towards the Poonghis but ‘reaffirmed his policy against joining Pakistan and “freedom before accession.”’132 Poonch was a traditional recruiting ground for the Indian army; some 40,000 soldiers from it had served the British during the Second World War. The Maharaja’s Government tried to confiscate all arms and ammunition from the local Muslims; but permitted the non-Muslims including the Hindu communal organization of RSS [Rashtriya Swayamsevak Sangh], to carry arms. The coming of migrant Hindus and Sikhs from west Punjab to Jammu added fuel to the fire. The Rashtriya Swayam Sevak Sangh (RSS), Akali Sikhs and members of the Indian National Army from India ‘in connivance with the police of Maharaja started the massacre of Muslims in Jammu. The Jammu massacre helped the Pakistan cause as it pushed ‘all hitherto

126 Sumantara Bose, Kashmir: Roots of Conflict, Paths to Peace, New Delhi, 2003, p. 32.
127 Being close to Punjab and having the similarity in culture and language as Punjabis.
130 Bazaar, op. cit., pp. 322-323.
132 Cited in Korbel, op. cit., pp. 69-70
nationalist or uncommitted Muslims into the pro-Pakistan camp. The Jammu and Kashmir Government authorities by the beginning of October overtly took part in the massacre of Muslims. Along the State’s border with Pakistan in the region of Gujarat and Sialkot, a depopulated zone was created. The non-Muslims were evacuated and the Muslims were either killed or driven across into Pakistan.

The massacre of Muslims infuriated the tribesmen and the tribesmen from NWFP, who had close ties with the people of Poonch, pledged to take revenge against the Dogra State. Thousands of demobilised soldiers living in Poonch and Mirpur and hundreds of soldiers serving the Pakistan armed forces resigned joined ‘revolutionary armies’ to fight for the liberation of their nation. They began to filter into the State’s boundaries. In order to revenge against the killing of their brothers, in Jammu the tribesmen called for a jihad against the Maharaja’s Government. It was 22 October 1947 and came to be called as ‘tribal invasion.’ “The invasion,” writes Josef Korbel, “was easily incited by the stories brought into the North-West Frontier Province by Muslims, fleeing before the terror of Dogra troops in Kashmir.” They were joined by the ‘Azad revolutionaries and supported by Pakistani volunteers from west Punjab and the adjacent states of Swat and Dir. Jointly they were commanded by General Akbar Khan, who used the pseudonym of “General Tariq,”[after the name of great Muslim military commander who had successfully defended Islam in Spain over a thousand years back]. The tribes men in quick succession occupied Muzaffarabad and Uri in the North-West and besieged the towns of Mirpur, Poonch, Kotli, Jhangra, Naoshera, and Bhimber, in the south west of the State ‘dispersing and liquidating the demoralized’ Dogra troops.

On 24th October the existence of Azad Kashmir or Independent Kashmir was announced. The Azad Kashmir Government in a statement stated that the Azad

133 Ian Copland, ‘Abdullah Factor,’ op. cit., p. 245.
134 Alastair Lamb, Incomplete Partition, op. cit., p. 128
135 The Times (London), 10 October 1947 reported that “323700 Muslims had been exterminated. The census reports also show shocking decline of Muslim population in Jammu from 61 to 38 percent between 1941 and 1961.
136 Bazaz, op. cit., pp. 323-324. Lord Birdwood affirms that the tribal ‘invasion was the direct legacy of the previous State persecution of Muslims.’ Lord Birdwood, International Affairs (Royal Institute of Internal Affairs 1944), Vol. 28, No. 3 (Jul., 1952), pp. 299-309, p. 302.
137 Korbel, op. cit., p. 73
138 Based on a telegram signed by Mr Anwar, Civil and Military Gazette, Lahore, reported on 8 October that an “Azad” Government of Jammu and Kashmir has been formed with headquarters at Muzaffarabad, 20 miles from Pakistan border. When the Poonch revolt assumed the shape of a full-
Kashmir Government was formed "with the object of ending intolerable Dogra tyrannies and securing to the people of the State, including Muslims, Hindus and Sikhs, the right of self-government." It also asked both the Dominions India and Pakistan to help it in securing political freedom of Jammu and Kashmir. It claimed that it was a non-communal government which "will include Muslims as well as non-Muslims in the provincial cabinet which will serve the people, fulfil the temporary purpose of restoring law and order in the State and enable the people to elect by their free vote a popular legislature and popular government." On 26th October through Uri via Jhelum Valley Road they entered the town of Baramulla, some fifty kilometres away from Srinagar.

While as they [tribes' men] were knocking the doors of the capital city of Srinagar, the Maharaja, finding that he could not defend 'Kashmir' with his own resources, fled away to Jammu, the winter capital, his native region; and begged India for armed assistance to deal with this situation, though without offering to accede to India. On 24th October he sent his Deputy Prime Minister, R.L. Batra to New Delhi to ask Jawaharlal Nehru and Sardar Patel for Indian military help. India, however, held the view that "it would be the height of folly to send troops into a neutral state and that the accession of Kashmir to India was a prerequisite; but this accession would be conditional on the will of the people, as ascertained through a referendum as soon as law and order were restored." Two days before the accession, on 25th October 1947, Jawaharlal Nehru in a secret telegram to Prime Minister of United Kingdom informed him about the Maharaja's appeal for assistance and India's stand: "We have received urgent appeal for assistance from the Kashmir Government. We would be disposed to give favourable consideration to such request from any friendly state. Kashmir's northern frontiers, as you are aware, run in common with those of three countries, Afghanistan, the U.S.S.R. and China. Security of Kashmir, which must depend upon its internal tranquillity and existence of stable government is vital to security of India ... helping Kashmir, therefore, is an obligation of national interest to

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140 Korbel, pp. op. cit., 73-74.

India.” In addition, he made it clear that “question of aiding Kashmir in this emergency is not designed in any way to influence the state to accede to India......the question of accession in any disputed territory or state must be decided in accordance with wishes of the people.”

Hari Sing in his letter of accession to Lord Mountbatten, the Governor General of India stated: “with the conditions obtaining at present in my state and the great emergency of the situation 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.” On 26th October 1947, the ‘beleaguered Maharaja’ signed the formal “Instrument of Accession” to India. As per practice the Maharaja through the accession ceded to India control over defence, foreign affairs, and communications. While accepting the accession on 27th October 1947, Mountbatten, as the Governor General of India made it clear that “it is my Government’s wish that, as soon as law and order have been restored in Kashmir and her soil cleared of the invader, the question of the State’s accession should be settled by a reference to the people.” Sheik visited Delhi on 25 October 1947 and at the residence of Nehru on 26-27 October, ‘with a view to bargaining both with Indian Government and through the Indian Government with the

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142 Secret Telegram No. 392-PS, Dated 25th October 1947 From Prime Minister, India, To Prime Minister, United Kingdom, London, File No. 11(8)-PR/47, Government of India, Ministry of States (Political Branch), NAI.


144 Alastair Lamb doubts the date of accession. Maharaja was delaying the accession only to secure first the communication by improving the road from Jammu to Srinagar via Kathua. All this activity has been recorded in full detail in the first volume of ‘Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel’s Correspondence which was published in 1971. From these correspondences it becomes crystal clear that India was heavily engaged in some kind of military intervention in the State of Jammu and Kashmir in the mid September and by the third week of October a substantial foundation for such an operation had been laid, Patiala regiments were already stationed in Srinagar airfield and Jammu the winter capital, almost ten days before the direct intervention of Indian troops on 27th October 1947. For details see Lamb, Disputed, op. cit., p. 130.

Kashmir Darbar about the future constitution of Kashmir. From Delhi, Shaikh in a press statement urged the need to resist the tribal invasion which according to him was the covert attempt on part of Pakistan to absorb Kashmir into Pakistan. Shaikh Abdullah actively organized a 'national militia' to defend the city of Srinagar. "No proper administration was functioning in Srinagar. The only efforts to control the situation were being made by volunteers of the National Conference."

In order to get the support of the Muslims of Srinagar and to save the minority it became desirable to India to set up an Interim Government under Shaikh Abdullah whose cooperation India considered the "only hope to save the situation." Further the Intelligence agency of India was reporting in late October that "although he[Shaikh] is yet loyal to the national aspirations of the people of Kashmir and, perhaps, generally the Indian National Congress, he may not be in the same mood for long if no settlement is reached between his party and the Kashmir Darbar." Maharaja was convinced to form an interim government under Shaikh Abdullah. Thus when the Maharaja signed the accession on 26th October, he also agreed to set up an interim government headed by Shaikh Abdullah. Shaikh Abdullah took over as the Head of the Administration in the Jammu and Kashmir State on 31st October 1947. He appointed emergency officers in most of the departments that were to deal with the situation. These officers were drawn from his party National Conference. But the state Shaikh Abdullah inherited from the Maharaja was only the half of the Princely State of Jammu and Kashmir that existed before the partition of India. As the partition became evident, revolts were started by the people of tribal areas against the domination of the Dogra State. Like in Poonch, the people of Gilgit revolted against the Dogra regime and declared Gilgit part of Pakistan. That became the northern areas of Pakistan.

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147 Times of India, 28 October 1947
148 Mr Menon's Report on his Visit to Srinagar, File No. 11(8) - PR/47, Government of India Ministry of States (Political Branch), Correspondence, NAI, p. 3 and 5.
149 Kashmir Affairs- Accession of Kashmir State to the Dominion of India, op. cit.
151 Zutshi, op. cit., p. 309.
Meanwhile Indian troops, reinforced by armoured cars which had arrived by road via Jammu and the Banihal Pass and the helicopters pushed the raiders out of the vicinity of Srinagar. They then took control over Baramulla and Uri, a border town on 8th November. However, beyond there the Indian troops faced stiff resistance from the invaders. Their condition was further worsened by the approaching winter. In addition the Pakistan army had overtly come in the field and it had assumed the shape of first Indo-Pak war over Kashmir.\(^{152}\) Many observers believe that Nehru did not want to go beyond this area because of its tough geography but more importantly, his secular friend Shaikh was not popular beyond this region. The region then [as now] was dominated by non-Kashmir speaking Muslims who were supporters of Muslim Conference. Meanwhile the invaders had bounced back and liberated many areas from the Indian troops. It was because of these circumstances that Nehru took the Kashmir case to United Nations. As Lord Birdwood revealed: “December 1947 had not been a good month for India’s Army in Kashmir...apart from the initial advances from Srinagar, the Azad Kashmir troops were hitting back at many points along Indi’s tenuous lines of communications. There was therefore some relief in Delhi at the Government’s decision to take the matter to the Security Council.”\(^{153}\)

It may also because the local population and administration of Shaikh was not as supportive as before. Baldev Singh, the Defence Minister of India and Sardare Patel, accompanied by V P Menon, Secretary Ministry of State visited Jammu and Kashmir on November 4 1947. In his note Baldev Singh wrote about Srinagar, “the local population being largely Muslim has been inflamed by them (raiders) and has joined them. Military officers have reason to believe that many of the National Conference volunteers have acted as spies and let them down time after time. The Ministry (Kashmir Administration) has not been forthcoming with the co-operation and assistance which can be expected from a civil government whose territory has been violated and imminently in danger.” In contrast “[T]he position in Jammu [local


\(^{153}\) Lord Birdwood, Two Nations and Kashmir, op. cit., p. 87.
population was mostly Hindu] seemed to be better than at Srinagar as the population was behind our troops."  

The changing mood of Shaikh and the people was possibly because of the killing of seven workers of National Conference by the Indian army when they had gone to welcome them. Their bodies were buried by the Indian troops in a trench. People were angry and raised anti India and pro-Pakistan slogans. Sofi Ghulam Mohammad, the former editor of Srinagar Times, an Urdu Daily from Srinagar, being an eye witness, recorded: “The mood of the people changed very immediately against the Indians ... there were slogans against India and in favour of Pakistan.”  

They also attacked the residence of Shaikh Abdullah and hold him responsible for the incident. According to L.P. Sen, Shaikh Abdullah was so nervous that “he began to feel suspicious about the intentions of Indian leaders.”  

In this surcharged situation Nehru felt it fit to take the case to the United Nations which sent a commission to investigate the matter. The commission succeeded in the beginning of 1949 in inducting the two dominions to agree to a ceasefire and a truce, with the respective forces occupying the territory in their hands at the time truce was accepted.  

“Significantly,” concludes Zutshi, “thus it was the revolt of the Poonchis against the authority of the Maharaja- not a Pakistani movement against the Indian State, as the later claims- that laid the foundation for the de facto division of the Princely State of Jammu and Kashmir in the coming months.”  


In the given surcharged political situation, Shaikh Abdullah’s slogan of “freedom before accession” lost its relevance. Having complete faith in the ‘socialist and secularist’ Nehru, who assured the world that the future of the state would be decided by a plebiscite, Shaikh attested the limited accession in his utterances. However, when India [read Nehru] retreated from its pledge of protecting the

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154 Notes In the Ministry of Defence, Government of India, Ministry of States (Political Branch), Subject: Kashmir Affairs- Accession of Kashmir State to the Dominion of India, NAI.
157 William Barton, op. cit., p. 301.
158 Zutshi, op. cit., pp. 306.
autonomy of the state and conducting of plebiscite, Shaikh also developed other thoughts- in which an independent Kashmir was not excluded. This led to the arrest of Shaikh in 1953 by his old friend Nehru.\textsuperscript{159}

\textsuperscript{159} It will be discussed in the subsequent chapters
Chapter Four
Lion in Power (1947-53)
Shaikh Abdullah as the Prime Minister of Jammu and Kashmir

When the British left Indian subcontinent the inhabitants of the princely states were left at the mercy of their rulers and the independent states that succeeded the colonial state. The Princely State of Jammu and Kashmir soon became the battlefield between India and Pakistan and a region of world interest. As discussed in the previous chapter when the Maharaja sought military help from India against ‘invaders’ he was asked to accede his State to India and also to take Shaikh Abdullah in the administration and “made [him] responsible for it along with the Prime Minister.” Consequently, on October 26, 1947 the Maharaja asked Shaikh Abdullah “once his fiercest enemy,” to form an Interim Government and he was nominated as the Head of Emergency Administration by Maharaja “without precisely defining his powers and demarcating” them from those of his Prime Minister, Mehar Chand Mahajan. Thus, Shaikh Abdullah who had asked Maharaja to quit Kashmir in 1946 joined his Government. In spite of the fact that the Maharaja had a de jure prime Minister in the form of Mahajan, Shaikh Abdullah agreed to be the Head of Emergency Administration. But Shaikh soon found it difficult to work with the coalition of the Maharaja and Mahajan. “All Hindu communalists of the Jammu region joined hands with him (Maharaja) to block every effort of Shaikh Abdullah to give the State an efficient administration during the trying times of war on the one hand, and economic recession on the other.” Maharaja did not trust Shaikh Abdullah. Every action of Shaikh was checkmated and he found himself ‘hemmed in on all sides.’

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1 Zutshi, op.cit., p. 326.
5 There were compulsions for India to rely on Shaikh for he was the popular leader of Kashmir and “key factor in winning the plebiscite for India”, Balraj Puri, Jammu And Kashmir, Triumph And Tragedy Of Indian Federalisation, New Delhi, 1981, p. 74.
6 R. N. Kaul, Shaikh Mohammad Abdullah- A Political Phoenix, New Delhi, 1985, p. 49
7 Ibid.
8 Mehar Chand Mahajan, op. cit., p.164.
9 Kaul, op. cit., p. 50.