CHAPTER VIII
Maharaja Pratap Singh as the elder son of Maharaja Ranbir Singh succeeded to the throne of Kashmir in 1895. The tragedy with Maharaja Pratap Singh was that he had no child to succeed him. The Maharaja, therefore, wanted to adopt a son of his choice. He had expressed his desire to adopt the second son of Raja Baldev Singh of Poonch for various reasons. But his every contention and claim put forward by him was rejected by the Government of India. So the state cabinet conspired with some well wishers of Hari Singh to see that Hari Singh becomes the proper heir of Kashmir after the death of Pratap Singh.


2. Ibid.
   a) "The selection should be of a boy of such a tender age as would admit of his separation from natural parents without doing violence to his feelings...;"
   b) "I have an undoubted right conferred on me by an act of adopting a son... there exists absolutely no reason why I should not exercise the right towards the betterment of my condition;"
   c) "The Maharaja wanted to adopt a son as he was also permitted to do it by Maktul-ul-Amal."

3. Ghulam Hassan Khan, Freedom Movement in Kashmir, New Delhi, 1980, p. 9. Maharaja Pratap Singh was permitted to adopt the desired child for the purpose of performing religious ceremony after his death.
In those days non-Kashmiris were supreme in the administration of Kashmir. Hari Singh was sure that they would not help him when the dispute about the accession to the throne between him and the adopted son of Maharaja Pratap Singh came about. Evidently, when Hari Singh became the senior member of the administration in the state, he introduced the State Subject Bill. The Kashmiri Brahmins, who had taken to the English education, quicker and earlier than any other community in the state, had a larger share in the employment of the state, but with the advancement of education among the Muslims of the Valley, the Kashmiri Pandits found it very difficult to get government jobs to the extent they used to get previously. They, therefore, in their interests and in the interests of the state as a whole,

4. Early in 1905, the Dogra Sabha in Jammu had protested against the domination of the state administration by the Indian Civil Service Cadres. After 1910, the Sabha had started a vigorous campaign for the reservation of administrative employment for the people of the state. This movement later came to be known as the 'State Subject Movement'. See Report of the Committee on State Subject Rules, 1922; Ram Pratap Nath Shett, Political and Constitutional Development of the Jammu and Kashmir State, Delhi, p. 45., also see the Resolution of the Dogra Sabha, 1905, 1910 and 1912.

spearheaded the 'State Subject Movement.' They vehemently protested against siphoning off the higher as well as lower government jobs to the British Indians to the detriment of the interests of Kashmiris. They, in order to exercise their force in support of the bill and with a view to making their opinion known to the people and the government, demanded an organization and platform to express their feelings.

Swami Shiv Ram Anand Saraswati, the Mahant of Durga Maq, supported the young men. Under his patronage and powerful voice, application was made for the granting of permission to start an organization called Sanatan Dharma Young Men's Association or Yuvak Sabha as it was popularly known. It is important to mention


The Kashmiri Pandits launched a movement which was known as Kashmir for Kashmiris under the leadership of Shanker Lal Koul. They demanded recruitment of educated sons of the soil in government services; ban on the sale of land to outsiders, freedom of press, freedom of assembly and creation of an elected legislature to voice the views of the people on all affairs of the state, see Prem Nath Bazel, Kashmir in Crucible. New Delhi, 1967, p. 29; Almost all the government offices posts, and contracts were dominated by the people who were either from the Punjab or British India. National Archives of India, Foreign Deptt. Secret, 6, February 1898; National Archives of India, Foreign Deptt. Secret, 6, July 1897; Jammu & Kashmir Archives, File NO: 40-5-18 of 1904, Political Deptt. Ibid., File No: 162 of 1904, Political Deptt.


here that the Muslims of Kashmir were overwhelmingly indifferent to the bill. Being mostly illiterate, they were not in a position to understand the far-reaching effects of the bill. They opposed the state subject movement and opposed against the reservation of administrative appointments for the state subjects. They proposed instead that Muslims from the Punjab and other parts of India be appointed to the state services in place of the Hindus from the state or outside; who, the Muslims complained, had dominated the state government and rendered it inimical to the Muslim interests. Sheraraja made his own reasons to support the state.

10. The leading figure who opposed the state subject movement was G. A. Ashai. He was one of the Muslim witnesses and pleaded the cause of Muslims as a community and not as residents of the state of Jammu and Kashmir. See R. H. Dickoo, Kashmir, New Delhi, 1979, p. 20.

11. Statement made by Dr. G. A. Ashai, submitted to the Committee on the State Subject Rules: Memorial containing demands of Kashmiri Muslims to Lord Reading, 1924, see the statement of Mirza Ch. Resool and Dr. G. A. Ashai to the state subject Committee, 1924 (Published All India Kashmir Committee, 1931).

11a. The Muslim Kashmir Conference regretted that there was scarcity of Muslims in the judicial, Forest and Public Works departmental services of the state. It requested that if competent Muslims be not available in the state itself, then competent Muslims be imported from outside the state, just as non-state subjects of other communities are imported for state services. Syed Mohsin Shah Vakil, honorary secretary, Muslim Kashmir Conference to the Chief Minister, Maharaja, 11th May, 1920, Jammu and Kashmir Archives, File, No. 2/91-14 of 1920, Political Dept.
Subject Movement and he secretly assured his support to the sponsors of the Movement.  

The State Subject Movement bore its fruits on January 31, 1927 when the State Subject Law was passed.  

Besides, there were many other reasons that led to the formation of the Yuvak Sabha. First, a piece of land which originally belonged to Shiveleya Temple at Gurubesar, Srinagar, was illegally occupied by some Punjabi Hindus. Kashmiri bandits wanted to annex the land to the adjacent temple. But without a proper organisation it was not possible for them to accomplish it. So the formation of an organisation was very essential. Secondly, many religious places of the Hindus were in a very dilapidated condition. Steps were proposed to be taken to repair these religious places for housing patnshala (schools) in them. These patnshala meant to impart religious education to the members of their community. Besides, they also planned to provide modern education among the community so that they could keep pace with the times. Thirdly, they wanted to free the Hindu society from all sorts of social evils, customs and superstitions. Since no organisation could be started without the previous permission of the government, so the king pin of the organisation, Pandit Prem Nath Chiken, supported by few other bandits

15. Ibid.
forwarded an application to the government. The government granted recognition and sanction to the Yuvak Sabha since it was a non-political body. Thus Yuvak Sabha came into existence in 1921-22. The Sabha established its office at Shivalya temple. Later on it was shifted to Lala Ranji Was's house at Kahan Nadera, Srinagar.

The prominent workers of the Yuvak Sabha were: Pandit Jee Lal Vilen, President of the Sabha, Pandit Niti Lal Zrai, Pandit Jairamshen Darg, Pandit Shridar Koul Buloo, Pandit Amar Nath Kiele, Pandit Vaman Shait of Hanjora, Pandit Jemki Nath Dirangoo, Pandit Shrimoo Nath deben, Pandit Ved Lal Vekil, Pandit Hira Koul And Pandit Prakash Koul.

This association claimed to represent and serve the interests of the whole Hindu community of Kashmir. Although the membership was restricted to young men, the association was the

10. Jammu and Kashmir Archives, file no: 2/15-163 of 1921, Political Deptt. It was laid down vide order no: 57-C, dated August 23, 1911, by His Highness that no Sabha or organization could be started without the permission of the government.

11. Interview with Kashyap Pandhu, Dr. cit.

12. Shulam Kahan Kran, Dr. cit., p. 58.

13. Ibid.

14. Interview with Kashyap Pandhu, Dr. cit.
chief nucleus of the Kashmiri Hindu workers in the city of
Srinagar and enjoyed the confidence of the older members of the
community and also of the non-Kashmiri Hindus. It worked for the
development of Hindu art, culture and religion. Besides it
worked for unity among various communities in Kashmir. It always
emphasised the need for maintaining communal harmony in the
Valley. The Sabha urged both Hindus and Muslims to act in a way
that would preserve the peaceful relation of the communities. It
appealed to the people of Kashmir to cement their traditional bonds
of unity. It showed its desire to advocate the cause of other
communities as their own.

Pandit Jia Lal Kilam, while speaking in a mass meeting at
Hazuri Bagh, Srinagar on 18th June, 1924 remarked that there could
be no true unity among the Hindus and Muslims as long as Hindus
were the weaker party. He suggested that Akharas (arenas for
wrestling) should be started were physical training would be
imported to the Hindus. He further suggested to the Hindus that
they should extend their full co-operation to the Sikhs who formed
that backbone of the Hindu community.

21. Ibid.
23. Ibid.
24. Ibid.
25. Ibid.
The Sabha also worked for the abolition of the caste-system and declared that there was no objection to the depressed classes being allowed to take water from the public wells and tanks commanded by the Maharaja. But on the whole the activities of the Sabha were limited. It remained mostly busy in looking after the religious places and did not have the necessary will to extend its services towards the improvement of socio-economic lot of the people. The leaders of the Sabha were mostly government servants and as such they paid little, rather no attention towards the evils that had crept into the social life of the Kashmiri Pandits.

Re-Organization of the Yuvak Sabha

During the closing years of Maharaja Pratap Singh's rule, the Punjab communal politics had crossed the state boundaries for the first time. Violent propaganda was persistently carried on in the Punjab Muslim Press the All India Kashmir Muslim Conference, the Simla Kashmiri Muslim Board. Dr. Sir Mohammed Iqbal's presidential address at the previous session of the All India Muslim

26. Ibid.

League openly advocated a Muslim Confederacy for North-western India, which inevitably fired the imagination of Kashmiri Muslim youth.  

In December, 1930 the Nawab of Dacca in his presidential address to the All India Kashmiri Muslim Conference declared that it was a matter of shame for the Muslim majority of Kashmir to be ruled by the Hindu minority. Then followed, in quick succession, the publication of several Muslim vernacular papers like the Incilab, the Kashmiri Muslaman, the Kashmiri Masloof, Hatta Haya, Jiyassat, Kasben and the Muslim Outlook which took up the cause of Muslims, pleading for their deliverance from the Dogra rulers.

These papers raised the cry of Islam in danger in order to kindle the religious fanaticism among Muslims. Most of these journals and papers were patronized by the British to brow-beat the Maharaja.

28. Ibid.
29. Ibid., p. 7.
30. The Incilab, Lahore, December 14, 1929; The Jiyassat, Lahore, June 6, 1929; The Kashmir, Lahore, June 26, 1923; The Muslim Outlook, Lahore, June 1, 1928; (National Library, Calcutta), The Fasbih, Jammu, Vol. 3, Nos. 74 and 76, 1927; (Jammu University).
32. Rashid Tossar, Jehriq-i-Hurriyat Kashmir, Srinagar, 1968, Vol. 1, p. 140; M.K. Teng, A.K. Bhat and Santosh Koul, Kashmir: History and Documents, Delhi, pp. 17-19. The Kashmir Committee was formed after the meeting of some well-known Muslims like Mian Husain, Sir Zulfqar Khan, Moulana Abdul Kalam Azad, Dr. Ansari, Moulana Shaukat Ali, Dr. S. M. Iqbal, the Nawab of Dacca, Sheikh Badiq Hussain Ansari, and Dr. Sajid-ul-Din Kitchlu on July 24, 1931. Mirza Mian Bashir-ud-Din Mahmud Khalifa of the Cadian Party, was made its President. Though initially started with the object of rendering financial assistance to Kashmir leaders for organizing the movement against the Maharaja, the Kashmir Committee openly supported the Muslim Movement by sending Jathas (Volunteers) to Kashmir in 1931. Ibid., pp. 141-42; also see Inside Kashmir, p. 142.
A number of Kashmiri Muslim Committees had also sprung up all over the Punjab and Central Kashmir Committee was constituted at Lahore to co-ordinate the work of the Committees. About this time one of Faqir Abubarkat Mohamad Fazil of Jelalpur visited Kashmir and distributed pamphlets imparting communal colour to the situation in Kashmir. He also set-up an organisation called Muslim Rejider or a M.I. I. Club.

The Kashmiri Muslims became politically conscious of their rights and under the guidance of Punjabi leaders they raised the slogan, "asi gachi asun panun sultan; asi gachi asun shah sultan? (We should have our own ruler; we should have a king, who is a sultan).

33. Rashid Eseer, X. Cit., p. 140; H. N. Tikoo, Story of Kashmir, p. 112. The Ahre Party in Punjab organized several demonstrations to express their sympathy for the state Muslims. I. A. Nath Ravez, The History of Struggle for Freedom in Kashmir, New Delhi, 1952, pp. 109 and 110. It is also stated that the Ahre Party and the Ahmedie Organisation were responsible for giving communal colour to the political situation in the state.

34. Kashmiri Hindus and the Recent Disturbances, Or. Cit., p. 7.


They organised mass processions, shouting anti-government slogans. The children were seen marching in the streets crying

"Begonah mare gai asi Musalman adi ladi kilae tai adi jailkhan asi gachi asun punun sultan?" (We innocent Muslims have been killed for nothing, some have been imprisoned in the fort and others have been locked up in the jails, we must have our own ruler).

The Kashmiri Pandits being a microscopic minority in Kashmir extremely felt nervous. Their nervousness increased when they suspected that nearly thirty thousand Muslims from India had entered the state to support their brethren in Kashmir. The British did not allow the Muslims to enter the state. On the contrary colonel Colvin, the Prime Minister of Kashmir asserted that the members of the Kashmir Committee would not be allowed to enter the state without permission. Colonel Saily, the Resident in Kashmir, supported the stand of Colonel Colvin and urged the Delhi Durbar to suppress such Punjabi Muslim groups as the Kashmir Committee. And as such thousands of Jathas (volunteers)

37. Ibid.

38. Ibid., p. 7; R. N. Pikoo, op. cit., p. 112.


40. Ibid.
were arrested. All the same the infiltration continued and the situation got out of control of the state government.\(^41\) Hence the outside intervention in the Kashmir politics generated communal fervour within the Valley. The \textbf{Hindu Rationalist Party} acted as a catalytic agent to arouse communal passions.\(^42\) Besides, there were certain other factors; like tragic and accidental happenings of the 
\textit{Khutbah},\(^43\) \textit{Kashiduran},\(^44\) leaves of the Holy Quran found in public latrines, the help given to the local agitation by outside Muslims,\(^45\) which were responsible for arousing the feelings of the Muslims against the government with whom the Hindu community had generally linked their interests for about eight or nine decades.

\begin{itemize}
\item \textbf{41.} P.H. Tikoo, \textit{M. cit.}, p. 112.
\item \textbf{42.} National Archives of India, Home Department, Political, June 1931, File No. 18, Fortnightly Report for the first half of June from the Resident in Kashmir, Vol. 1-3-7/30 dated June 19, 1931.
It was not very uncommon for a microscopic minority of Kashmiri Pandits to feel insecure under these circumstances when the Kashmiri Pandits had to live under fears and threats. There occurred a significant event in the history of Kashmir. It so happened that on July 13, 1931, the unfortunate an incident of firing at the Central Jail took place. In this firing nine Muslims were killed.

This was followed by communal disturbances. In that agitated atmosphere many Hindu houses and shops were looted and the loss amounted to several lakhs. Innocent men and women, young and old were assaulted and killed. About 290 persons were

46. A large crowd of Muslims had gathered at the Central Jail to hear the trial of one Abdul Gadeer, a non-Kashmiri Afghan charged with the sedition. The Muslim youth tried to enter the premises of the Central Jail, but the mishandling of the situation led to firing. The dead and wounded bodies were brought on the charpoy to the main city where the whole scene took communal colour. See Kashmir's Journey to Freedom. (A survey of political events in Jammu and Kashmir), National Conference, Mujahid Manzil, Srinagar, Kashmir; National Archives of India. Home Department, Political July, 1931, File No. 18, From the Resident in Kashmir, Nos F-9-C/30 dated July 17, 1931; Srinagar, 1931, p. 6; Srinagar, 1931, p. 53, 115; Report of Srinagar Riot Enquiry Committee, (Jammu and Kashmir Archives).

47. National Archives of India, Home Department, Political July 1931, File No. 18, From the Resident in Kashmir No. F-9-C/30 dated July 17, 1931.


a\l sentenced, 167 persons wounded, 2 persons were killed, 54 shops and 11 houses were looted. Vicharnag was the area most affected by the disturbances. Besides loot and pelting of stones, Kashmiri Pandit ladies were roughly handled there. It is not out of context to mention here that two weeks before the outbreak, a Kashmiri Pandit girl about 9 years old was kidnapped, raped and then strangulated to death. This gruesome murder struck horror in the whole Hindu community. After the postmortem in the Hospital, a group of Pandits took out a funeral procession. But they were mercilessly charged with lathis by the police.

49. Kashmiri Hindus and the Recent Disturbances, op. cit., pp. 25-40; F. L. Lakhampal, (ed.) Essential Documents and Notes on Kashmir Dispute, New Delhi, 1958, (International Books), p. 272. According to S. K. Khar the looters at Vicharnag were incited by Sheikh Mohammed Abdullah's speeches. He is said to have told the Muslims that "the Pandits take all the employment and none was given to them." Jammu and Kashmir Archives, Evidence Recorded in public, Report of the Srinagar Enquiry Committee, 1931, witness No. 65, p. 177. The fact could not be denied that some respectable Muslims like Khan Sahib Mirza Ghulam Mustafa, Noor Shah and Salam Shah and the Shie's gave shelter to some Hindus and protected them from the attacks of the rebels. See Kashmiri Hindus and the Recent Disturbances, op. cit., p. 12.


52. Ibid., Kashmiri Hindus and the Recent Disturbances, op. cit., p. 12.
same time the Pandits caught a Muslim while attempting to break the idol in the Shankracharya Temple. The Pandits appealed to the government to bring the offenders to book and prayed for rule of law and order. But on this appeal the Muslim leaders excited their followers against the Hindus who were threatened in very violent and insulting languages.

In the changed environment some Kashmiri Pandits re-organised Yuvek Sabha, which was later designated as the All State Kashmiri Pandit's Conference, to ventilate their grievances and safeguard their life and property.

Prem Nath Bazaz, a great social reformer and politician, was made the President of the Sabha, while Pandit Damodhar was made the Secretary. Pandit Kashyap Bandhu was called from Lahore where he was working as editor of Arya Gazette. Among other...

53. Ibid.
54. Ibid.
55. Ibid.


56. The Rajbri, December 19, 1932; Daughters of the Vitasana, Op. Cit., p. 251. The original name of Kashyap Bandhu was Tara Chand Koul, a youth of twenty. He had left Kashmir a decade earlier to seek fortune in India. There he embraced Arya Samaj and married Vimala Devi... He returned to Kashmir in August, 1931, along with his wife, joined the movement and forthwith distinguished himself as a tireless worker.
members who were associated with the Sabha were Jia Lal Kailam, Pandit Mahesh Chander Khina, Prof. Jia Lal Koul, Pandit Pota Koul Jallali, Pandit Aftab Koul Misamat and Pandit Shrider Koul Duloo.

The success of the Muslim Movement soon taught the Pandits that a very small minority which identified its interests with those of despotic rulers could have little political future. Under the changed political condition the Yuvak Sabha leaders deemed it proper to devote themselves to bringing reforms in the social set-up of the community. It is important to note that even orthodox members of the Shrama Sabha, who were at first opposed to reforms in the Hindu society were compelled to join the Sabha.

**Aims and Objectives of the Yuvak Sabha**

The following were the aims and the objectives of the Yuvak Sabha:

1. "Looking after, protecting and pleading the cause and rights of Kashmiri Pandits;"

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57. Interview with R. K. Kak, *op. cit.*
2. Urging upon the government to see that the law and order was maintained in the state and helping the authorities in enforcing the same;

3. Infusing a spirit of patriotism among Kashmiri Pandits and helping the Maharaja in maintaining the state against anti-state elements;

4. Working for the social uplift of Kashmiri Pandits;

5. Pleading the cause of female education among Pandits;

6. Protecting and looking after the religious places of the Hindus; fighting for the restoration of those religious places to Hindu community which had been under dispute for a long-time;

7. Helping the members of the Kashmiri Pandit community find their rightful place and status in the state by means of presenting to the government their demands and other lawful means;

8. Preserving and helping the growth and development of Hindu culture, art and religion; and

9. Striving for a peaceful life in the state. For this purpose, the different sections of its community were asked to create cordial relations among themselves.

Besides, "many all-inclusive plans were drawn up to reconstruct the community as an ideal society of self supporting, healthy and civilised people".61

Body Organization

In the changed environment and as a reaction to the political movement of July 1931, the Fraternity re-established itself as Sanatan Dharam Youngmen's Association or Yuvak Sabha. It became the executive committee of the Yuvak Sabha with Damodhar Bhat as its Secretary. Three sub-committees were formed -

1. to collect funds and material (clothing, beds and utensils etc) for those Hindus who were looted and whose houses were damaged;

2. to collect facts and figures regarding the political disturbances and prepare a report for submission to the official commission which was about to be appointed by the Maharaja; and

3. to enrol new members to Yuvak Sabha. Prem Nath Bazaz was elected as President of three sub-committees.

The Sabha established its headquarter at Shital Nag and Kashmiri Pandits were organised throughout the province. The branches of Yuvak Sabha were established in every tehsil and big


64. Ibid.

65. Interview with Kashyap Bandhu, op. cit.
villages of Kashmir. These branches used to collect information about the grievances of the people. The Kashmiri Hindus got well united through the Yuvak Sabha. It was underlined in the whole atmosphere that nothing should be said or written that may harm the fundamental unity of Hindus and Muslims of Kashmir. The Sabha was of the opinion that people should never act in a way that would impair the peaceful relations of the communities. It appealed for communal harmony and urged the Hindus and Muslims to cement their traditional bonds of unity. It showed its desire to advocate the cause of other communities as their own. Such steps, said Basaz, "would be in the self interests of Pandits in particular and other Hindus in general." Besides, a daily paper Harkend was launched and it was named as official organ of Yuvak Sabha. Kashyap Bandhu its chief editor.

66. Ibid.,
67. Representation of Sanatan Dharma Youngmen's Association Srinagar to the Prime Minister 6th September, 1931.
71. The copies of it are available at the office of the Yuvak Sabha, Shitalnath, Srinagar (Kashmir).
Worship of the Sabha

The first and the foremost step taken by the Sabha was to help those Pandits who had suffered a lot during the political disturbances in Kashmir. Thousands of rupees were collected together with clothes, bedding, utensils and other household articles. Prem Nath Basas assured every Pandit of help and security. They also prepared a memorandum describing the causes of the communal disturbances in the Valley and victimisation of Pandits. The same was presented to Sir Harjor Dalal Commission by Prem Nath Basas. However, the Pandits were not satisfied with the recommendations of the Commission.


73. Janatan Sharm Youngmen's Association, 1931, Kashmir Hindus and the Recent Disturbances forwarded by Prem Nath Bazas, (Jammu and Kashmir Archives, Jammu). Among the members who prepared the memorandum were Professor, Jaya Lal Koul, Tota Koul Jalali, Shanker Lal Koul, Professor, R. K. Bhat and Mahesh Chander Raina.


74a. On 14th July, 1931. His Highness appointed a commission to investigate the circumstances which led to the disturbances at the jail, Maharajgunj and other localities in the city of Srinagar. The Commission was presided over by Sir Harjor Dalal. Other members of the Commission were Raja Bahadur Bodh Raj Sawhney, Khan Bahadur Sheikh Abdul Layoom, Kh. Saad-u-Din Shawl and Pandit Jia Lal Killam. See File No. 43/Jud-32/ of 1931 General Department, Jammu and Kashmir Archives, Jammu.

The next step was to bring a change in women’s raiment.
The President of the Sabha always persuaded his party to put an
end to the persecutions and cruelties perpetrated on Hindu widows.

The first step in this direction was to change the dress
of Kashmiri Hindu ladies, in keeping with the changing times. The
dress of her body was a loose garment called pheran. It was
stitched all around the collar and bottom by an inch wide ribbon
called dur. The Kandit ladies also stitched a piece of printed
cloth (chintz) or brocude (zarbeefi) round the cuffs of their pheran.


77. Pheran is a unique type of cloak not to be found in
other parts of the country. Both male and female of all
classes and communities used pheran with little variations
here and there. See Kashmir Today, 1960, Vol. 4, Nos. 7
106; Daughters of Village, Op. Cit., p. 199. Quarter Master
General, Gazetteer of Kashmir and Ladakh, Delhi, 1890.
Reprinted in 1974, p. 472. The origin of the term pheran
is uncertain. It is claimed by some that word come from the
Persian Palraban (garment or long shirt). However, this long
loose gown type of wear continues to be worn by the masses
even today. Its use is much common during the winter season when
it provides people with effective means of combating the
unbearable chill.

78. C. G. Bruce, Kashmir, London, 1915, p. 35; E. A. Lawrence,
The Valley of Kashmir, Srinagar, 1967, p. 252; E. F. Knight,
Where Three Empires Meet, London, 1905, p. 39; Dyndale Bissoe,
Kashmir in Sunlight and Shade, London, 1922, pp. 138-139;
It was called narivar and was used to indicate that the wearer's husband was alive. The old ladies used simply the printed pieces while the younger ones used brocade or zarbaf for their Narivar.  

The Pandit women's headgear was known as faranga, a piece of white coloured cotton cloth worn round the head. Over this faranga they had again a long strip of cloth running from head to ankles called the pooch. Having again a coloured piece of cloth round their waist called lunci, to tighten their loose phera. A Pandita never moved about without this girdle.


81. Pooch resembles the figure of a snake (stamp) and it is believed that pooch is the symbol of Nag worship in Kashmir.

Early in 1921 an effort was made to change the Narivar and Hasli of ladies pheran. These two pieces of valuable cloth were the penals which they added to their pheran for beauty and fashion. It was Kashyap Bendhu who wrote a poem appealing the ladies to give up the above mentioned two penals attached to their pheran. The song above these two penals was sung by ladies on the wedding days83 and a reply was issued to this song and that too was sung on wedding festivals84. But he could not succeed in his mission. Again in 1931 Pandit Kashyap Bendhu appealed the Kashmiri ladies from the platform of Yuva Sabhe to give up not only the penals of pheran, but also pheran85. He urged the ladies to replace pheran with saree, blouse and petticoat. However some ladies pleaded for kurta (shirt), shilwar (trousers) with a chunni (scarf) as the most suitable attire in a cold country like Kashmir87. The leaders moved from Mohalla to Mohalla and door to door in the wards

83. Interview with Kashyap Bendhu, op. cit.
84. The Kashmir, December 19, 1932.
85. The Tribune, September, 25, 1931.
of the Srinagar locality to appeal the ladies to give up pheren. Some women responded to the call and adopted saree in place of pheren. The married ladies took to saree while the unmarried one adopted kurta and shilvar. It is interesting to note here that those Pandits who had previously resisted any change supported the young men zealously. The change in outlook was the result of education and the opening up of the Valley to the outside world. The Pandits who had returned to the Valley from the Bright India might have definitely produced a momentous effect on the culture of the people of Kashmir.

Another evil practice which had attained the force of law was the system of dowry. The practice of dowry seems to have prevailed since time immemorial. Many parents were forced to incur huge debts at exorbitant rates of interest. In addition to a lump-sum dowry at the time of marriage a Kashmiri Pandit girl was supposed to present to her mother-in-law an amount of money, according to


89. *History of Srinagar*, p. 87.

90. Ibid., p. 88. The Pandit families who had migrated to India during the Afghan rule returned with changed outlook. Their dress and language had undergone a great change. Their social intercourse must have certainly brought about a change in the dress of those Kashmiri Pandits who came into contact with them.
teth(rate). This system known as atapet was strictly followed for the first year of marriage, but slackened in course of time. Besides, every time that a father visited his daughter's house he had to pay some cash; and if he had to invite his daughter to his house, he had again to pay some cash. It was a severe tax on a Kashmiri Hindu who was blessed with daughters. Pandit Jia Lal Kilam said once in a meeting that unless the customs of dowry and other ceremonial wasteful expenditure with which we have generally burdened ourselves at the marriages of our girls are abolished, we shall continue to look upon the birth of a daughter as a serious calamity.


92. Walter R. Lawrence, The Valley of Kashmir, p. 262.

93. The marriage ceremonies started two weeks earlier of the day of actual marriage. These two weeks were the weeks of hectic activity. Women used to prepare oil cakes in monds called weari. When this nicety was prepared women left on rounds to their relatives with the wearis. These waris were distributed among the relatives, symbolising the invitation cards. On the day of marriage a number of baraties visited the bride's house. They were served with different varieties of food and vegetables. Any shortage in the meals would mean loss of prestige to the family and would incur the wrath of groom's father. Generally the parents of the bride sank in deep depth of debt. See P. N. K. Bansai, op. cit., p. 30; Koshur Samachar, November, 1981, Vol. XIX, No's 11, (a sociocultural monthly), pp. 7-9.
The Yuvak Sabha made plans and schemes for curtailment of expenditure on marriages and festivals, that had become an ostentatious affair. Pandit reformers of this period like Kashyap Bandhu, Haripal Koul, Gopi Krishen and Uma Rashid also raised loud and bitter protest against the extortionate payments demanded by bridegroom's parents from the father of the bride. But the reforms launched for the curtailment of dowry proved a complete failure. However, one or two marriages were celebrated without any give and take through the good offices of the Yuvak Sabha. In 1944, the Janajjudhar Janati came into existence to achieve the same objective. Dramas in Kashmiri were specially written and staged to caricature evil practices. All this, however, came to nothing.

The Sabha launched a vigorous campaign reform to change the dress of the bridegroom. The bridegroom was adorned on Mughal pattern having head-gear with an ornamented feather plume called Kalgi worn by princes of royal families. There were hardly sixty Kalgis in the whole Kashmir. A dozen of these feather plumes used to be preserved in the houses of rich Kashmiri Pandits and equal

number of these were preserved in rich Muslim families. The remaining were in the 'Toshkhana' of Maharaja of Kashmir. Here one can understand the plight of Kashmiri Pandits in the marriage seasons, when on a single day more than a hundred marriages were to be performed. The Yuvak Sabha raised a bitter campaign in that direction. It proposed a single kurta and pijama or a long court called Achkan and a simple saffron-coloured turban as his headgear.

As soon as the resolution was passed, the people took to the new dress. The practice of drum beating in front of the groom stopped. The horses which the grooms now rode ceased to have any decoration. All this puzzled the woman-folk of Kashmiri Pandits and they gave up to their feelings in a song. Besides, the practice of sending and arranging Durbaras and Dacenbaras to bride and groom houses came to an end.

The problem of widow marriage could not escape the attention of the Yuvak Sabha. The President of the Sabha always persuaded his party to put an end to the persecution and cruelties perpetrated on Hindu widows. The yeoman service rendered by the Sabha

97. Interview with Kashyap Bandhu, *op. cit.*

98. Ibid.

99. "कर्नाना है किसे बिन बिहिम नाम यार के - इसी लिये लैज़ुंक हाँड़े रोज़ा।"

100. Rachna Kuri, *op. cit.*, p. 50; *Daughters of the Vitasta*.

brought about the widow marriage Act of 1933, which legalized marriage of Hindu-widows. As a result, the number of widow-marriages began to increase day by day. The Sabha organized widow marriages. There were three thousand young widows at that time. The Sabha arranged marriages for some widows.

The Sabha pleaded the cause of women's education among the Kashmiri Hindus. It believed that no scheme of social reform would ever be successful as long as our girls are not educated. Girls education is the as much the duty of the state as it is of the boys. Professor Shri Kanth Rashkhan and the Yuvak Sabha took rapid

101. The preamble of the Act stated that:

"Whereas bearing in mind the advance in ideas recently made in Hindu-society, the recognition by the majority of Hindus that the incapacity of Hindu widows to contract a second valid marriage is harmful to Hindu society and the progress made all over the world as also in other parts of India towards the emancipation of women, we consider that the removal of obstacles to remarriage of Hindu widows in the state will lead to the promotion of good morals and to the public welfare.

102. Interview with Kashyap Bandhu, op. cit..

103. By 1921 there were 6 widows in the age group of 5-12; 54 in the age-group of 12-15; 53 in the age group of 15-20; 1,145 in the age-group of 20-40 and 3,287 in the age above 40. See Census of India, 1921, Vol. XXI, Part I, p. 150.

104. Interview with Kashyap Bandhu, op. cit.
strides in this direction. The Sabha also advocated that religious instructions should be provided in all schools under state control, frequented by Hindu girls. But it is a sad picture that the Sabha pleaded at length for girls' education but could not establish its own schools for imparting education to the girls of their community. It may thus be said that the Sabha once again failed in its mission of promoting girls' education.

The Kashmiri Pandits who were highly educated community represented the intellectual class of Kashmir society. All this notwithstanding the educated Pandits did not get government jobs in proportion to their education. They were disgrunted and frustrated with growing unemployment among themselves. Prem Nath Bazaz, the President of the Yuvak Sabha wrote to the government mentioning the sad plight of unemployed Pandit youth. But he received a reply from Maharaja Hari Singh which was far below his expectations.

105. Ibid.
107. In October, 1931, Maharaja Hari Singh expressed these words to a deputation of the Kashmiri Pandits. "I am certain you will be the first to recognise that with the steady growth of education in other communities the position of advantage which your community enjoyed in the past in regard to the state service cannot continue." See The Tribune, October, 27, 1931.
Meanwhile, His Highness Maharaja Hari Singh appointed a Commission called Glancy Commission under the presidency of Mr. B. J. Glancy. This Commission was appointed to look into the grievances of the people. The government nominated Prem Nath Bazas as a member on it to represent the Pandits of Kashmir. But the Kashmiri Pandits had developed imaginary fears predicting that the Commission would not do justice to their community. So they expressed their desire to boycott the Commission. But Prem Nath Bazas, the leader of the Sabha, without paying any heed to the desires of the Pandits accepted his membership to the Commission. As a result, Kashmiri Pandits lost faith in their leader, Prem Nath Bazas. He was forced to resign from the Yuvak Sabha. The

109. The other members of the Commission were G. A. Ashai, Mr. Chulam Abbas and Lok Nath Sharma of Jammu. Jammu and Kashmir Archives, File NO: 65/M-47 of 1931, General Department.
110. Shri Kanth Khar, President of the Yuvak Sabha, branch Nawakadal, Srinagar, in a telegram to the Prime Minister at Jammu conveyed the apprehensions of the Kashmiri Pandits that the Glancy Commission would not do justice to his community and further communicated the lack of Pandits confidence in Prem Nath Bazas. See File NO: 308/F3-119 of 1931, Jammu and Kashmir Archives, Political Department.
111. Ibid.
111a. Jia Lal Kilam was appointed as the President of the Yuvak Sabha in place of Prem Nath Bazas. See Ibid.
Commission submitted its report in 1932, but failed to satisfy the aspirations of the Kashmiri Pandits. Its recommendations came to them as a blot from the blue.\(^{112}\)

**Roti Agitation (Bread Movement)**

The Glancy Commission Report evoked sharp reaction from the Hindus in the state. Hindus viewed the recommendations of the Commission as an attempt to strangle them politically and economically. In Kashmir the Pandits launched a virulent agitation protesting against the recommendations of the Commission and demanded their rejection by the state. The agitation came to be known as **Roti Agitation** and was led by the Kashmiri Pandit Yuvak Sabha.\(^{113}\)

The Hindus did not confine themselves to the contest for services or to the distribution of the available state patronage. During the Bread Agitation they presented a number of memorials to the Ruler which envisaged\(^{114}\)

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1. Drastic reforms in the economic organisation of the state;

2. Industrial employment to the people in the state;

3. Extension of the opportunities of employment for the educated young men;

4. State-aid and encouragement to young men to establish industries in the state;

5. Appointment to the government services and the grant of scholarship for education on the basis of merit, educational qualifications and technical capabilities;

6. Rejection of any demand for reservation of employment in the state or the distribution of scholarship for education by the state in trade, commerce etc.

7. Right to bring fallow and waste land under cultivation and the grant of aid to improve and diversify the agricultural production.

115. Number of unemployed Kashmiri Pandits and Muslims of the Valley.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>No</th>
<th>Qualification</th>
<th>Number of Muslims</th>
<th>Number of Pandits</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1.</td>
<td>M.A.</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.</td>
<td>M.Sc.</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.</td>
<td>M.A., L.L.B.</td>
<td>NIL</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4.</td>
<td>B.A., L.L.B.</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5.</td>
<td>B.A.</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>82</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6.</td>
<td>B.Sc.</td>
<td>NIL</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7.</td>
<td>P.A.</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>117</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8.</td>
<td>F.Sc.</td>
<td>NIL</td>
<td>17</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9.</td>
<td>Matriculates</td>
<td>198</td>
<td>797</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10.</td>
<td>Others</td>
<td>250</td>
<td>Not available</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The above statement of Pandit unemployed youth is from Srinagar while the list of Muslim youth is from the whole Valley. The numbers of unemployed Pandit youth from Baramulla, Sopore, Anantnag, Kulgam and Bhanwar were 30, 12,
The Bread Movement aroused wide spread response from the Hindus all over the state. The state government obviously was not in a position to introduce reforms in the economic organisation of the state, the Hindus suggested. The one effective achievement of the agitation was to ward off the reservation of employment on communal basis. However, the government dealt with the agitation with extreme severity. The Maharaja's government swooped down on the community and hundreds of Kashmiri Pandits suffered detention and caning by the police. Two prominent Kashmiri Pandits, Pandit Shiv Narayan Pедер and Pandit Zarardan Teng met Sir Fej Bahadur Sapru at Allahabad and apprised him of the happening in the Valley. The Bread Movement, however, did not lead to any beneficial results for the community, but it did create a sort of under current of communal tension in Srinagar which lasted for quite some months.

After Bread Movement, the communal harmony vanished. It brought forth a leadership which was by and large communal in approach and aim. This explains why the Yuwak Sabha and its official organ did a lot of propaganda to show that Muslim

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F.N. 115 Conta. 40, 18 and 4 respectively. See File No. 30/43 of 1932, Political Department, Jammu and Kashmir Archives.


Conference was a communal organisation. Muslim Conference in fact represented the majority of the Kashmiris who happened to be the Muslims. The aims and objects of the Muslim Conference since its foundation in 1932 remained secular in principle.

In the year 1939, National Conference was founded by Shaikh Abdullah, the late Chief Minister of Kashmir. He is said to have founded the National Conference in the hope of winning over the Kashmiri Pandits. With the passage of time some enlightened Kashmiri Pandits joined National Conference and almost all the top ranking leaders of the Yuvak Sabha too joined the

118. Mohammed Ishaq Khan, Perspectives on Kashmir, Sringer, 1983, pp. 4-7.


120. Shaikh Abdullah in sixth session of the Muslim Conference said that Hindus and Sikhs alongwith the Muslims had suffered immensely at the hands of the irresponsible government. Prem Nath Bazaz, The History of Struggle for Freedom in Kashmir, New Delhi, 1954, p. 168. He again said "Let us rise above petty communal bickering and work jointly for the welfare of the masses. I appeal to my Hindu brethren not to entertain imaginary fears and doubts, let us assure them that their rights shall not be jeopardized if they join hands with the Muslims." Quoted in Dr. P. S. Gajendragadhar, Kashmir Retrospect and Prospect, Bombay, 1967, p. 24, also see Korbel Josef, Dangers in Kashmir, London, 1956, p. 20. This call observes Gajendragadhar "spoke for enlightened, progressive, secular nationalism and was in a sense consistent with the historical background of Kashmir itself." Ibid.
National Conference. As a result, the Sabha lost effective as well as collective leadership. Then it came into the hands of Shri Narain Poteedar who conducted its affairs for some time.  

Significance

The leadership of the Yuvak Sabha had a conservative ideology and narrow political outlook. They paid little attention to the social and religious upliftment of their community. They were engaged in job seeking activities for its members and for helping them in transfers from one place to another. Its political and economic programme was on a very low-key and it gave only a secondary importance to the problems of poverty and unemployment which confronted the entire state. Factionalism and groupism which had hitherto divided the Yuvak Sabha were seen to recur in the organisation and kept it like a house divided against itself.

121. Interview with Keshyap Bandhu, op. cit.
122. Interview with P. K. Kak, op. cit.
124. In the second assembly election of 1938, for example Pandit Jia Lal Kilam extended his support to Dev Koul against the Yuvak Sabha’s candidate. It is said that the Yuvak Sabha’s defeat in the North-Kashmir constituency was due to the role played by Pandit Kilam. See Ghulam Hessen Khan, op. cit., p. 255.
The conservative elements tried to exploit the organisation in their self-interests rather than strengthen it as an instrument of reform and change of the community as a whole. This development was responsible for the rise of personality cult in the Pandit politics. The Yuvak Sabha proved abundantly a reactionary party and a centre of communalism. To support the reactionary elements became its duty and dharma. No doubt, some reforms were introduced by the Sabha which, to some extent, brought about a change in the social life of the Kashmiri Pandits. But the reforms introduced remained in force only for few years. Moreover, reforms proved chaotic and cumbersome. While the reform scheme of the Yuvak Sabha emphasised simplicity, the cheap saroo dress began to be replaced with costly series in course of time. This had an unhealthy effect on the Pandit society and thus the whole scheme was defeated to a considerable extent. However, it goes to the credit of the Yuvak Sabha leaders that they were successful in solving the dispute between the Hindus and Muslims of Anantnag over Naqbal issue.
