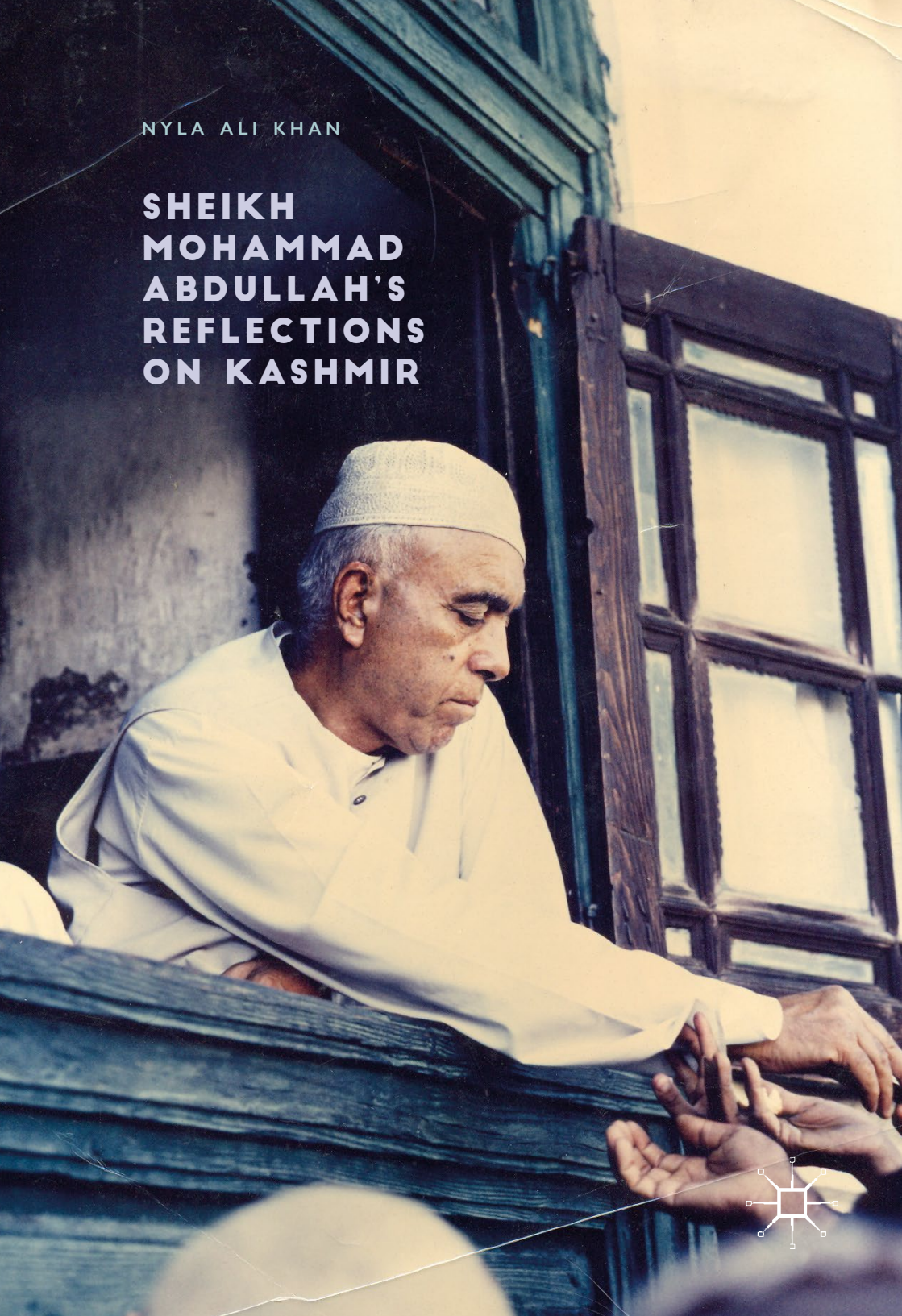


NYLA ALI KHAN

**SHEIKH  
MOHAMMAD  
ABDULLAH'S  
REFLECTIONS  
ON KASHMIR**



Sheikh Mohammad Abdullah's  
Reflections on Kashmir

Nyla Ali Khan

Sheikh Mohammad  
Abdullah's Reflections  
on Kashmir

palgrave  
macmillan

Nyla Ali Khan

ISBN 978-3-319-50102-4      ISBN 978-3-319-50103-1 (eBook)  
<https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-319-50103-1>

Library of Congress Control Number: 2017963298

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The registered company is Springer International Publishing AG  
The registered company address is: Gewerbestrasse 11, 6330 Cham, Switzerland

## PRAISE

“An important collection of Sheikh Abdullah’s speeches and correspondence, it provides solid evidence for the distinctiveness of Muslim political thought outside the Pakistan Movement, which has generally been dismissed either as inconsequential or entirely dependent on the Congress. The volume forces us to reconsider the dualistic narrative which has dominated India’s modern history until the present.”

—Faisal Devji, *Reader in Indian History*, University of Oxford, UK

“This exceptional book should be taught at all institutions of higher learning in India and Pakistan, as it recuperates and reintroduces the erased voice of Sheikh Mohammed Abdullah, the founding father of a pluralist and progressive Kashmiri nationalism. For the Pakistani readers, Khan’s book will provide a necessary and enlightening antidote to the often maligned and unjust representations of Sheikh Abdullah in the Pakistani media and historiography.”

—Masood Ashraf Raja, *Associate Professor of English*,  
*University of North Texas, USA*

“Nyla Khan had done vital service to our understanding of the plight of the Kashmiri people by putting together the writings and speeches of Sheikh Mohammed Abdullah. Sheikh Abdullah—decades after his death—remains an important voice for justice and peace in the region. Any observer of the region who ignores his words will fail to grasp the possibilities for Kashmir’s future.”

—Vijay Prashad, *author of No Free Left: The Futures of Indian Communism*

“This book reflects Dr. Nyla Ali Khan’s meticulous intellectual engagement with the larger-than-life Kashmiri leader Sheikh Mohammad Abdullah who was much more than a politician. Abdullah opened up the possibilities of imagining

a different Kashmir than what the nationalism projects of India and Pakistan dictated. His speeches, letters, and interviews explain why Kashmiri voices have been subsumed by jingoism in the subcontinent—to deflect and undermine the inclusive and pluralist Kashmiri identity. This is an invaluable resource for students, researchers, and all those who wish to understand conflict-ridden subcontinent and its elusive Paradise called Kashmir.”

—Raza Rumi, *author, journalist, and editor of Daily Times, Pakistan*

“Nyla Ali Khan’s record of publication stands in opposition to the erasure of Kashmiri history, and this latest and very welcome addition positions itself as a bridge between generations, preserving the writings of a role model for “pluralism in the face of divisive politics.” Collecting the speeches of Sheikh Mohammad Abdullah between 1953 and 1976, Khan argues for a Kashmiriyat that, in his words, finds room for “the freedom struggle of Kashmir” in the midst of (and not in opposition to) “the independence movement of the Indian people.” Against monolithic nationalism Khan emphasizes that these mutual ideals are still realizable, and that the younger generation requires hope, beyond anger, and a practicality that can be recuperated from Abdullah’s writings. As President of the South Asian Literary Association, I am impressed by this collection as a potential pedagogical tool in classes on the Partition, on border frictions, and on contemporary nuances of nationhood and globalization.”

—John C. Hawley, *Professor, Santa Clara University, California, USA*

“Nyla Ali Khan’s *Sheikh Mohammad Abdullah’s Reflections on Kashmir* passionately invokes Sheikh Mohammed Abdullah as one of the original voices in the high-stakes debate on the right of the Kashmiri people to determine their own political future as an independent state. Planned as a compendium of the Sheikh’s speeches from the 1930 to the 1970s, the book also functions, in effect, not just as the intellectual and political biography of one of the principal actors in the Kashmir issue, but also as a critical narrative that traces the origins of the “Kashmir issue”—its status as a disputed region claimed by both India and Pakistan over which three wars have been fought.”

—Rajender Kaur, *Associate Professor of English and Director of Graduate Program, William Paterson University, New Jersey, USA*

“This collection of Sheikh Mohammad Abdullah’s speeches and letters is indeed an urgently needed work of recovering historical memory to resurrect the concept of Kashmiriyat, a species of cultural nationalism that recognizes and embraces the heterogeneity of the Kashmiri people in the cause of their right to self-determination. Guided by Professor Khan’s lucid and eloquent preface that explains the genesis and exigency of this work, and her informative and illuminating introduction establishing the historical context within which the great Kashmiri leader’s words

and ideas need to be understood and appreciated, the readers are presented with a treasure trove of political wisdom that seeks in its pluralistic approach not only ideological and cultural inclusiveness but also “unity among all socioeconomic classes” of Jammu and Kashmir. Among the foremost scholars on Kashmir in the world, Professor Khan is committed to the idea of a grassroots’ social movement that finds its fulfillment in democratic political institutions. “I believe,” she writes, “without a shred of doubt, that in civilized societies, political dissent is not curbed and national integrity is not maintained by military interventions.” She confronts the political situation of her native land candidly and impartially, marshals the facts with skill, and presents her argument with rare clarity and perceptiveness. In more ways than one may imagine, she is the true heir of her maternal grandfather, the inimitable Sheikh Mohammad Abdullah, whose words come alive and find pertinence once again through her timely retrieval and persuasive advocacy.”

—Waqas Khwaja, *Ellen Douglass Leyburn Professor of English,  
Agnes Scott College, Georgia, USA*

“Dr. Nyla Ali Khan has written an important book that shows how one person can have a huge impact on the lives of millions of people. She shares stories of her grandfather, Sheikh Mohammad Abdullah, who worked tirelessly for social justice in his homeland of Kashmir & Jammu. Among his many endeavors was the realization and promotion of universal rights for women. Abdullah also advocated for universal education in Kashmir. In that part of the world, both of these ideas were unheard of at that time: Abdullah began a civil disobedience movement. After reading *Sheikh Mohammad Abdullah’s Reflections on Kashmir*, I now have a better understanding of Kashmir’s complicated history.”

—Michael Korenblit, *author of Until We Meet Again and  
President of the Respect Diversity Foundation*

## AUTHOR'S NOTE

This compendium is an emphasis on the significance of constructing a politics that would enable the rebuilding of a pluralistic polity and society in Kashmir, furthering the progress of indigenous institutions and promoting democracy as well as demilitarization.

The author is fully cognizant of the collision of the ideas of self-determination, identity, and unity propounded by the young members of the Reading Room Party and the Plebiscite Front with the brutal force and suppression wielded by the Indian and Pakistani nation-states.

The author has appraised not just the history of the Kashmiri nationalism dominated by the elite, but she has also carefully looked at the politics of the people and the political mobilization engendered by such politics in her work.

Popular mobilization in Jammu and Kashmir during the 1930s and 1940s took the form of uprisings, which was a primary locus of political action. This potent political resistance was led by people like Sheikh Mohammad Abdullah, Chaudhry Ghulam Abbas, Mirza Afzal Beg, Maulana Masoodi, and Kasap Bandhu, who did not have access to the echelons of power and spoke vociferously from the margins. Their activism made substantive forays into established discourses and structures of power.

A consciousness cannot be built without a mechanism of political training, ideological education, and progressive action, which a close study of Sheikh Mohammad Abdullah's speeches and interviews would enable.



A Foreword by Ashis Nandy was supposed to appear in this book, but unfortunately was not ready at the time of publication. In order to view Professor Nandy's comments, please visit: <https://www.palgrave.com/us/book/9783319501024>.

## PREFACE

Before I go on to expound on my rationale and motive for this compendium as well as my political stance, I would like to make the reader aware that I have contextualized the images in this book by linking them to ideas, events, and political philosophies explained in the Preface and the Conclusion. The images that I have included are visual representations of ideations, some of which are still realizable. To that end, the contextualizations/captions in the list of illustrations are recapitulated and reinforced in the Preface.

Getting to know one's ideology is a work in progress. Ironically, it was in the United States—a country that prides itself on the power of its military-industrial complex—that I cultivated the drive to study the South Asian politico-cultural matrix, particularly the intractable Kashmir conflict. My commitment to pedagogy and scholarship has been unflinching, and my faith in the critical focus that education can provide has been unrelenting. Whether people see eye-to-eye with my stated positions or question them, any one would be hard-pressed to deny that I have a firm political ideology and conviction. I have spent a lot of time and energy delving into the erosion of indigenous politics in the State in my earlier work. And I have had the opportunity to immerse myself in the culture and polity of my native land, Kashmir, without which an understanding of the rich complexity of the sociopolitical fabric of the Kashmir Valley wouldn't have been possible. To enable a general reader to fathom the complicated political status of Jammu and Kashmir (J & K), currently, a large part of the State is administered by India and a portion by Pakistan. China annexed a section of the land in 1962, through which it has built a road that links

Tibet to Xinjiang. As I underline in my monograph on Kashmir, *Islam, Women, and Violence in Kashmir: Between India and Pakistan*, the strategic location of Indian-administered J & K underscores its importance for both India and Pakistan. The State of J & K borders on China and Afghanistan.

The Kashmir conflict is driven by nationalistic and religious fervor, each side pointing to the violence and injustice of the other, each side pointing to its own suffering and sorrow. The distrust, paranoia, and neurosis permeating the relationship between a large number of people of J & K and the Indian Union have intensified the conflict. The guerilla war in the State has gone through a series of phases since 1990, but repressive military and political force remains the brutal reality in the State, which cannot be superseded by seemingly abstract democratic aspirations. This conscious policy of the Indian State to erode autonomy, populist measures, and democratic institutions in J & K has further alienated the people of the State from the Indian Union. The systemic erosion of political opposition in J & K has delegitimized the voice of dissent and radicalized antagonism toward State institutions and organizations. The exposure of some democratic institutions as a brutal facade has instigated unmitigated disgruntlement and antipathy toward democratic procedures and institutions in the State.

Our peace and prosperity are inextricably bound with the peace and prosperity of the millions in India and Pakistan. In spite of the physical delineation of the boundaries, we all live in one zone. Our hopes, aspirations, fears, and dangers are the same.

We want a lasting and peaceful settlement of the Kashmir conflict, reflecting the wishes of our people. Therein lies honor, peace, and progress for all concerned.

Prime Minister Narendra Modi's interest in supporting the movement for self-determination in Baluchistan shouldn't supersede the necessity of saving and protecting lives as well as restoring rule of law in Kashmir. The unwarranted use of force in Kashmir cannot continue unabated.

The current protests in Kashmir are being led by a generation that has known only conflict, political turmoil, and politicoeconomic instability. There is a lot of anger and resentment in this generation because no serious attempt has been made by the Government of India to mitigate the conflict while recognizing the constitutional and legal rights of the people of Kashmir. The complacency of the federal government in times of relative calm is culpable. Given the militarization and rabid fragmentation of Kashmiri society, it is necessary for the Government of India to evoke

pluralism in the face of divisive politics, instead of pushing people to the wall by the imposition of a monolithic nationalism, defined by the Hindutva agenda of the right-wing ultranationalist Bharatiya Janata Party. The unfinished business of the powers to be on both sides of the Line of Control (India and Pakistan) to ride roughshod over the history of Kashmiri nationalism and the evolution of a political consciousness in Kashmir, which began much before 1989, cannot continue unabated. It also becomes necessary for federal countries to reassess and reevaluate their policies vis-à-vis border states. The restoration of the autonomous status of J & K would be a viable beginning and would resuscitate rule of law and political self-determination.

Instead of deterring the growth of democracy and depoliticizing the people, the goal should be to empower the populace of J & K sufficiently to induce satisfaction with the Kashmir constituency's role within current geopolitical realities such that a disempowered populace does not succumb to ministrations of destructive political ideologies. I believe that people in civic associations and in government should lead the way toward a peaceful pluralistic democracy and support international negotiations for a sustainable peace in the region.

My love for the children of Kashmir is much greater than my disillusionment with the politics of the nation-states of India and Pakistan. I have no sympathy for those who get grist for their political, religious, and activist mills when Kashmiris are in the line of fire. We were not born to carry out the agendas of militaries, who should be fighting their own battles, for which they get the lion's share of each country's budget.

I see a lot of people playing to the gallery at this time. Not one of them has the courage to point out that the politics of reducing our younger generation to cannon fodder is reprehensible, because our current breed of political leaders has become a victim of its own image.

Nation-states have their own interests to protect; our shared interest should be the protection of the people of Kashmir, particularly the young, whose lives haven't even begun yet.

Let's place ourselves in the shoes of those who have suffered irreparable losses and will never know any closure. Time will not heal the wounds of such people. We need an indigenous constituency for conflict resolution.

In politics, the only viable way is forward, not a constant looking back. And policies and methods must be revisited, revised, and readjusted not just by mainstream politicians, but by separatist politicians as well in order to meet today's needs.

Do we require the resuscitation of a concrete political ideology, which bridges divides, as opposed to the deification of martyrdom in the murky conflictual world of politics in J & K? Has the Government of India been assiduously working to engage young people in J & K in the processes of democracy, to acquire skills and knowledge that would enable them to effectively participate in decision-making and political processes, to recognize the importance of standing up and being counted as well as the value of the vote? Is there a recognition of action civics in the higher echelons of power at the federal and state levels when it comes to facilitating the growth of political processes in Kashmir? Several attempts to deconstruct the political fabric of Kashmir have been made by academics, scholars, and ideologues of various hues, but it is high time we move beyond social commentary, demythologizing, and decanonizing to the revival of transformative progressive politics. I consider it a lot more significant to facilitate bringing about much needed systemic and structural changes in conflict-ridden, politically and socioeconomically decrepit polities in South Asia, like J & K. It is important for the civilian population of J & K to engage with the various political organizations, mainstream and separatist, in the State in order to evolve a solution that would facilitate nation-building.

More than mobocracy, kangaroo courts, lynchings, and panaceas, we need a return to the rule of law and the process of internal political dialogue. It is all very well to raise the slogans of self-determination, autonomy, and self-rule, but it is time to think beyond sloganeering about the kind of social and political fabric we want to create for younger generations. Sloganeering that is devoid of a clear blueprint for nation-building remains hollow and, eventually, becomes defunct. In order to prevent further fragmentation of our social fabric, regional political parties, mainstream as well as separatist, of diverse religious and ideological leanings, must create the pathway to repair the tapestry that Kashmir once was and give the younger generation hope for the future.

Pouring over the speeches of Sheikh Mohammad Abdullah, arguably the only Kashmiri leader who enjoyed mass support in his lifetime, has enabled me to realize that instead of allowing polarizing elements to disrupt nation-building, we need to cull advanced and reformist ideologies in order to build common ground. His speeches were recorded and translated by his close associates, those who fought with him in the trenches. At the time, he and his colleagues were considered *persona non grata* by the Government of India, preventing them from gaining access to reputable

publishing houses. So, I had to retrieve and dust the cobwebs off the documents reproduced herein, which provide tremendous insights into peace-building, democratization, and the processes of negotiation, dialogue, and accommodation required to reach some kind of fruition.

I was fortunate that important documents, originals as well as translations, regarding the founding and evolution of the Plebiscite Front, the Muslim Conference, the National Conference, and Sheikh Mohammad Abdullah's speeches were bequeathed to me. I spent hours listening to recordings of those speeches as well to make sure that the reproductions were authentic. Some of those speeches, which I have reproduced in this book, were independently and clandestinely published by various general secretaries of the then outlawed Plebiscite Front. Several of the documents that I retrieved had been gathering dust in the rubble of the Mujahid Manzil, the building which was once the rallying point of Kashmiri nationalist and resistance politics. Mujahid Manzil was razed to the ground in the 1990s. The historical documents in the flotsam and the debris, which were retrievable, still remain priceless. Some of Sheikh Mohammad Abdullah's speeches and interviews were translated and collected by offi-ciaries and foot soldiers of the "dissident" Plebiscite Front, who parted ways with the National Conference, the organization founded by the Sheikh in 1938, after his death in 1982, interring those documents in the quarries and caverns of history. Before some of those recorded speeches would begin to exude the rancid smell of decomposition, I managed to pull them out of the abyss. The material in *Interviews and Speeches, After His Release on 2nd January, 1968*, which I consider of great value, had gone adrift in the ebbs and tides of organizational politics and the cacophony of internecine. That's the reason I chose to bring the speeches in that collection to light, because I am driven by the greater goal of engaging with the various stakeholders in Kashmir and also for setting a firm ideological foundation.

During the course of my research, I particularly enjoyed reading Sheikh Mohammad Abdullah's first published biography by B. P. L. Bedi and Freda Bedi, who had played a monumental role in the drafting of the inimitable highly progressive and transformative "New Kashmir" Manifesto in 1944. The Bedis had known Sheikh Mohammad Abdullah as he rose through the ranks, developing his political training and ideological education. I found that slim volume in my parents' rich library.

I was further motivated to complete this project by the young Kashmiris, college and university students, who came to see me this summer on my

annual visit to my homeland. They observed that no one person and no one organization had copyright over Sheikh Mohammad Abdullah, and that a revival of the discourse of Kashmiri nationalism, which he symbolized, would repair the damaging divides and fill in the cracks in that polity.

As I underscored in *The Life of a Kashmiri Woman* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2014), to my mind, there is a historical value in revisiting and challenging the historical narratives about the political personages of pre- and post-1947 J & K and the movement for an independent Kashmir. My attempt to highlight the history of a region in a particular era, as I've done in *The Life of a Kashmiri Woman* as well, is not to localize it. As I've said before, I think it is important to reshape historical memory so that it includes the humanitarian and pluralistic endeavors of leaders of the movement at that critical juncture post 1948. I have been working on *Sheikh Mohammad Abdullah's Reflections on Kashmir* for a while, because I am of the firm opinion that a consciousness cannot be built without a mechanism of political training, ideological education, and progressive action, which a close study of his speeches and interviews would enable. Unless a popular politics of mass mobilization is merged with ideological guidance, not dogma, as well a grassroots social movement, it only leads to self-destruction. A serious student of South Asian politics and the politics of Kashmir in particular could analyze the ways in which experiences have been constructed historically and have changed over time.

In the past few years, every article that I've written, every radio and television appearance, as well as every Facebook post and tweet of mine have been instantiations of, as one of my reviewers puts it, "the high-stakes debate on the right of the Kashmiri people to determine their own political future as an independent state." In complementing *The Life of a Kashmiri Woman*, which was published in 2014, *Sheikh's Mohammad Abdullah's Reflections on Kashmir* allows me to interweave my several publications in various forums, including Facebook and Twitter, into this compendium, bringing my work and perspective full circle.

Working on these books has enabled me to critically appraise political, cultural, and social discourses which my locations of privilege hadn't allowed me to question previously. I have been conscious of the limited representations in some other works on Kashmir which reflect the power relations between those who represent and those who are represented. I am fully cognizant of the collision of the ideas of self-determination, identity, and unity propounded by the young members of the Reading Room

Party and the Plebiscite Front with the brutal force and suppression wielded by the Indian and Pakistani nation-states. I have not just appraised the history of the Kashmiri nationalism dominated by the elite, but also carefully looked at the politics of the people and the political mobilization engendered by such politics in my work. Popular mobilization in J & K during the 1930s and 1940s took the form of uprisings, which was a primary locus of political action. This potent political resistance was led by people like Sheikh Mohammad Abdullah, Chaudhry Ghulam Abbas, Mirza Afzal Beg, Maulana Masoodi, Ghulam Ahmad Ashai, and Kasap Bandhu, who did not have access to the echelons of power and spoke vociferously from the margins. Their activism made substantive forays into established discourses and structures of power. I have engaged constructively with issues of representation and knowledge production in my earlier and current work. The primary question for me is “Who is speaking and who is being silenced?”—enabling me to recognize the legitimacy of knowledge produced from the point of view of the local subject, the conviction of the workers of political parties who maintain the vibrancy of conviction and ideology, and the collision of the idea of self-determination with military oppression on the contentious site of nationalism.

Hard-core political analysis aside, I will never lose faith in the people of Kashmir. With every breath I pray that the younger generation of Kashmiris channelizes their anger and sense of alienation, and takes the political process forward without playing into anyone’s hands. The centrist politics of both nation-states, India and Pakistan, have worked on depoliticizing our society. We cannot let that happen!

Nyla Ali Khan



## ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

The completion of *Sheikh Mohammad Abdullah's Reflections on Kashmir* brings me to the end of a significant and personally fulfilling journey. This has been an arduous journey of revisiting history and deliberately veering away, at times swiftly swerving away, from the temptation of interpreting it through the subjective lens of contemporary politics. All the scholarly work that I have done since 2005 has resulted in the creation of an edifice, leading me in the direction of dredging up historical documents, the existence of which several analysts, political thinkers, and policymakers are unaware of. While writing my Preface and Introduction, I realized how closely intertwined I have been with the realm that I am attempting to bring to light in *Sheikh Mohammad Abdullah's Reflections on Kashmir*.

Since 2005, I have attempted to emphasize that cultural nationalism challenges and overthrows the hierarchy of ruling ideologies by enhancing a unity among all socioeconomic classes of an occupied area, which it has failed to do in the Kashmir context. This revolutionary stance could eliminate the petty feuds that exist in an area and can replace them with a sanctified notion of nation. History would no longer be imposed on them; on the contrary, they would be able to wield memory as a powerful tool. We, as a people, could impart resolvability to a disharmonious history.

This book is my sincere attempt to create an epicenter for the alternative epistemologies that the various political, religious, and cultural discourses written on the politico-cultural surface of Jammu and Kashmir have created. *Sheikh Abdullah's Reflections on Kashmir* is my recognition of the importance of ideology, conviction, perseverance, and working for

the well-being of the electorate in bringing about enlightened social and political policies.

Politics is an abstract notion for the young people in Kashmir, and not a concrete method to bring about long-term reforms, which younger generations could build on. Given the volatile situation in Kashmir, millennials or the Net Generation in the State are unable to employ effective strategies to successfully resolve issues that they are invested in; they lack access to their representatives/legislators/decision-makers in order to implement their recommendations; and they lack the space to reflect on their strategies, challenges, the processes of negotiation, dialogue, and accommodation required to reach some kind of fruition. As I've said elsewhere, the non-legislative reforms/changes that we require are proactive efforts and new colloquia, caucuses, and assemblies not just in J & K but in other parts of South Asia as well for the germination of broad-based coalition politics that transcends organizational fault lines, and give Generation Y the space to carve a trajectory through several barriers in order to make important and progressive political decisions. The thoughtfulness of the bright young Kashmiri students whom I am in constant touch with gives me insight and hope.

My work would not have been reflexive and I wouldn't have been able to maintain a critical distance from the events and people I have written about over the years had it not been for the intellectual space that my parents, Suraiya and Mohammad Ali Matto, have always given me. My mentors, colleagues, and friends, particularly Vincent B. Leitch, Betty J. Harris, and Catherine Hobbs, have helped me pave a path with their encouraging comments. *Oklahoma Observer*, *Red Dirt Report*, *The Norman Transcript*, and *The Edmond Sun* for having provided me with platforms to disseminate my work in my home away from home, Oklahoma. As the wise remind us, all politics is local. Jeffrey St. Claire and *CounterPunch* for having given me an inspiring forum with wider opportunities to foreground my stance vis-à-vis the politics of South Asia in general and Kashmir in particular. I gained a wider readership in the Indian subcontinent because of Lubna Mirza's excellent translations of my English writings into Urdu, which she rendered with sincerity and faith in my ideological leanings. My editor Alina Yurova came through for me at every step of the process.

Last but not least, my beautiful daughter Iman, who is my travel companion and accompanies me to Kashmir every year, and who imbues me with undying faith.

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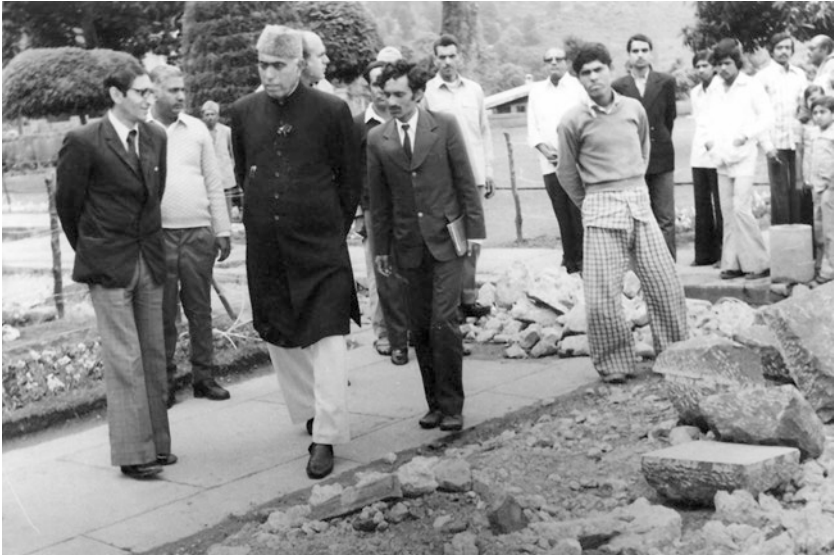
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**Image 1:** Sheikh Mohammad Abdullah reigned as Prime Minister of the State of Jammu and Kashmir from 1948 to 1953. Sheikh Mohammad Abdullah, for better or worse, was a large presence on the political landscape of India for 50 years. In a fragmented sociopolitical and religious ethos, he represented the pluralism that would bind the people of Jammu and Kashmir together for a long time, particularly the people of the Kashmir Valley. Such personages leave indelible marks of their work and contributions on societies for which they have tirelessly worked, and their work, for the most part, traverses religious, class, and party fault lines. To associate such personages with just one political party or one religious group amounts to a trivialization. Given the militarization and rabid fragmentation of Kashmiri society, it becomes necessary to evoke the man who symbolized *Kashmiriyat* or pluralism in the face of divisive politics. It also becomes necessary for federal countries to reassess and reevaluate their policies vis-à-vis border states.

In 1981, a year before he passed away, Sheikh Mohammad Abdullah led the *Eid* (Muslim festival) at the historical *EidGah* mosque, leading politicians and lay people of diverse ideological and political leanings in prayer, symbolically bridging divides.



**Image 2:** In addition to addressing the political aspect of democracy, it is important to take cognizance of its economic aspect as well, which is exactly what Sheikh Mohammad Abdullah, a man far ahead of his time, did. The dominant perception of Kashmir as just an insurgent state within the Indian Union and not as a political unit with legitimate regional aspirations might benefit security hawks, but will not do any long-term good.





**Image 3:** The monarch Maharaja Hari Singh's policies and unwillingness to deploy quasi-democratic measures caused the uprising of 1933, which was put down with unwarranted belligerence. Subsequently, a civil disobedience movement was organized by the Sheikh and his ally, Chaudhry Ghulam Abbas, but the maharaja was adamant in his refusal to relent. The strident voice of the people, however, could not be drowned, and the first democratic election in the State was held in 1934.

In the years prior to 1938, the rallying banner and political ideology of the Muslim Conference mobilized a collective sense of pride in regional identity. Sheikh Mohammad Abdullah had the political will and astuteness to create an efficiently organized network of young people who were committed to the party's ideology. His initial emphasis on a shared Muslim identity, which promised social and political enfranchisement, was a light at the end of the tunnel for an abject and politically disenfranchised people.

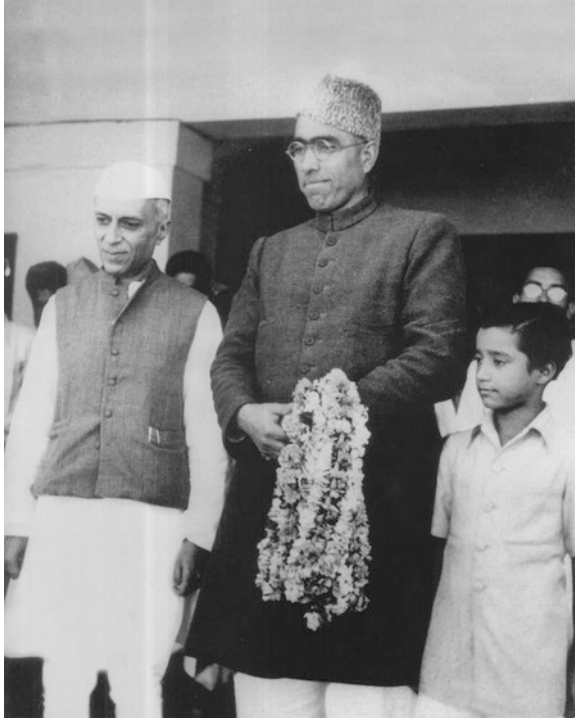


**Image 4:** The irony of Sheikh Mohammad Abdullah, an “Indian Muslim,” being put behind bars for voicing and advocating the right of self-determination “by the very Indians who won admiration and sympathy in the world in attaining their own” (Extracts from Commentary by Edward R. Murrow, May 1, 1958), wasn’t lost on the world community.



**Image 5:** At a public rally, Jawaharlal Nehru, first Prime Minister of post-colonial India, with Sheikh Mohammad Abdullah at his side, solemnly promises to hold a plebiscite under United Nations auspices in Srinagar, the summer capital of Jammu and Kashmir, in 1948.

In 1948, Sheikh Mohammad Abdullah became Prime Minister of Kashmir, and by 1953, he, who was a strong advocate for Kashmiri independence, began to openly question whether the Indian government would organize the plebiscite, since efforts had not been made to do so. Even though he took a peaceful approach, his display of skepticism—coupled with his ideas of an independent Kashmir—and the popularity it gained with others who shared his views, is what caused him to be deposed and imprisoned by the Indian government for the next 22 years, from 1953 until 1972.



**Image 6:** In December 1963, the simmering fury against New Delhi's dubious strategies in J & K finally erupted in volcanic proportions. The anger of the masses was fueled by the theft of a relic, believed to be a hair from the beard of Prophet Mohammad, from the Hazratbal shrine in Srinagar. In the wake of the unleashed chaos, a central action committee was formed to investigate the theft. The committee was headed by Maulana Masoodi, former general secretary of Abdullah's NC (who was assassinated in December 1990 by pro-Pakistan separatists), and comprised G. M. Karra, Srinagar district chief of the NC in the 1940s, and Maulvi Farooq, a religious leader. The repercussions of the theft of the ancient relic were so widespread that they shook the foundations not just of the picturesque Valley, but of Bengal and neighboring Pakistan as well. Shamsuddin was replaced as Prime Minister of J & K by G. M. Sadiq, New Delhi's blue-eyed boy, who shrewdly constituted



a cabinet that comprised his loyalists. He also astutely determined that in order to ensure the stability of his administration and prevent a large-scale revolt, it would be politically expedient to release Sheikh Mohammad Abdullah, who had been in incarceration since 1958. Abdullah and his comrade-in-arms, Mirza Afzal Beg, were released in April 1964. Abdullah returned to the Valley with a heightened, iconic status and was greeted by an ecstatic crowd of 250,000 people. The summer capital of J & K was festooned with erstwhile National Conference flags and in their delirium people seemed to have stormed the citadels of state power to give Abdullah a welcome accorded, in the Homeric period, to beings of godlike prowess and beneficence. Addressing a mammoth gathering of 150,000 people on April 20, Abdullah stridently said that in 1947 he had challenged Pakistan's ability to wield the religion card to annex Kashmir and now he was challenging India's authority to declare the Kashmir dispute moot and just hypothetical.

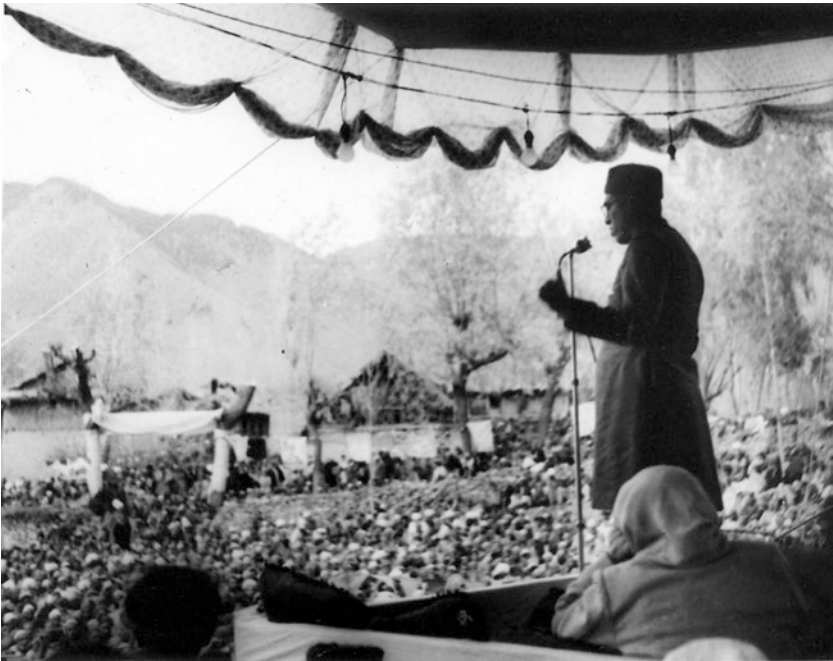
Subsequent to his release and talks with India's Prime Minister Jawaharlal Nehru in 1964, Sheikh Mohammad Abdullah traveled to Pakistan with his colleagues, Maulana Masoodi and Mirza Afzal Beg, to hold talks with General Ayub Khan, President of Pakistan.

- (a) Sheikh Mohammad Abdullah addressing a large gathering in Liaquat Bagh, Rawalpindi, Pakistan (page 42).
- (b) L to R: Mirwaiz Yusuf Shah; Chaudhary Mohammad Afzal, Deputy Speaker of the Pakistan National Assembly; Sheikh Mohammad Abdullah; Chaudhry Ghulam Abbas; and General Ayub Khan (page 42).

**Image 7:** The torch of cultural pride and political awakening in the princely state of J&K was lit by Sheikh Mohammad Abdullah in 1931. For the first time in decades, the Kashmiri people, particularly the Muslim population, acknowledged the leadership of a man who overtly challenged the hitherto impregnable authority of the maharaja. They responded to his politics with a zeal that was previously unknown. Despite persecution, the Sheikh continued to vociferously fight for the political, economic, and religious rights of the Kashmiri people. This picture was taken at the revered Hazratbal shrine, which remains a symbol of the syncretic ethos of Kashmir.



**Image 8:** Addressing the people of Baramullah and Uri: The development of Kashmiri nationalism, prior to the independence of India and creation of Pakistan in 1947 and its further evolution in later years, has not been adequately recognized or accommodated by either India or Pakistan. A point that I have made several times and at various forums is that the foundation of Kashmiri nationalism was laid in 1931, and this nationalism recognized the heterogeneity of the nation. It was not constructed around a common language, religion, culture, and an ethnically pure majority. This process of Kashmiri nationalist self-imagining is conveniently ignored in the statist versions of the histories of India and Pakistan.



**Image 9:** I find it pertinent to point out that Sheikh Mohammad Abdullah's arduous attempts to pull Kashmiri Muslims out of the morass of illiteracy and servility were misinterpreted as his communal and divisive politics. He would probably have been lauded for his efforts if he had been a revanchist member of the majority community. Religious and political rhetoric remains simply rhetorical without a stable and representative government. The redress of wider political, socioeconomic, and democratic issues in Kashmir requires reconceptualizing the relationship between political actors and civil society actors.

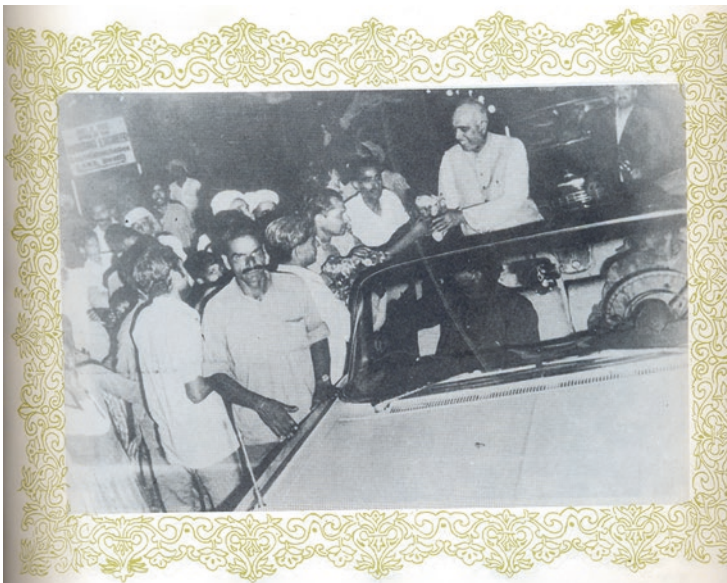




**Image 10:** Unlike the politicians in Kashmir today, separatist and main-stream, Sheikh Mohammad Abdullah had been arrested for “his political leaning which runs counter to the Government of India in Kashmir .... Sheikh Abdullah was never known for resorting to or even calling for violence; all that he had called for was that the people of Kashmir should be given their just right and that they should not be oppressed” (*Al-Zaman*, May 7, 1958).

He did not desist from trying to find a solution to the Kashmir conflict which would be in accordance with “the freedom struggle of Kashmir and the independence movement of the Indian people” (Abdullah, “The Kashmiri Viewpoint,” 41). Rule by *carte blanche*, either by mainstream politicians or by separatist politicians, is dangerous.

Although Sheikh Mohammad Abdullah’s political strategies, dialogues with the Indian and Pakistani states, negotiations, and political accommodations have been deprecated by his critics, his leadership, perseverance, patience in treading a lonely path, and fighting a long-drawn battle that led to several years of incarceration need to be viewed in light of the volatile geopolitical situation of the Indian subcontinent. The Kashmir conflict remains as refractory and cantankerous today as it was in his lifetime, with a plethora of political actors and stakeholders—regional, national, and international.



## Introduction

In my recent work, *The Life of a Kashmiri Woman* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2014), I documented the voices of women as a way of countering the traditional narrative. Women in Kashmir, bolstered by Sheikh Mohammad Abdullah's politics, played an important role in establishing a more inclusive democracy and new forums for citizen cooperation in the 1930s and 1940s. Female leaders led the way by offering new ideas, building broad-based political coalitions, and working to bridge organizational divides. *Sheikh Mohammad Abdullah's Reflections on Kashmir* seeks to continue that kind of grassroots work.

Sheikh Mohammad Abdullah, although a paradox, had the strength to inscribe narratives of the Kashmiri people's possibilities, ambitions, and accomplishments. He saw the people of Kashmir collectively, not individually, not ensnared in a familial framework, which wouldn't allow for an evolving consciousness. I have attempted to study Sheikh Mohammad Abdullah as a fallible human being who, several times, found himself at crossroads and didn't always make the most popular choice. He is not just a subject in this book of diplomatic papers, but an actor with agentive capacities as well.

A collection of Sheikh Mohammad Abdullah's speeches and interviews has not been done before. My project seeks to rectify that lacuna. The political purpose of my project is to expose the falsity of the mode of representing the Kashmiri subject as an "other" to the self—created by the discourses of the nation-states of India and Pakistan. The primary

readership will comprise students and scholars of the South Asia, not just in the United States and the United Kingdom, but in South Asia as well.

It will also interest a general audience which considers an intellectual understanding of the Kashmir issue more important than political expediencies dictated by time and situation.

In *Sheikh Mohammad Abdullah's Reflections on Kashmir*, my attempt is to highlight what I consider a serious omission in the histories of independent India and Pakistan. The development of Kashmiri nationalism, prior to the independence of India and creation of Pakistan in 1947 and its further evolution in later years, has not been adequately recognized or accommodated by either India or Pakistan. A point that I have made several times and at various forums is that the foundation of Kashmiri nationalism was laid in 1931, and this nationalism recognized the heterogeneity of the nation. It was not constructed around a common language, religion, culture, and an ethnically pure majority. This process of Kashmiri nationalist self-imagining is conveniently ignored in the statist versions of the histories of India and Pakistan.

Here, I would also like to point out that there are some purportedly “subaltern” versions of the history of Kashmir which, in their ardent attempts to be deconstructionist, insidiously obliterate the process of nation-building in Kashmir in the early to mid-decades of the twentieth century, inadvertently feeding off statist and oftentimes right-wing versions of history. In romanticizing militant resistance in Kashmir, such versions fail to take into account the tremendously difficult task of restoring the selfhood of a degraded people, and also the harsh fact that a political movement which does not highlight the issues of governance, social welfare, and the resuscitation of democratic institutions ends up becoming obscurantist.

Can the evolution of Kashmiri nationalism be viewed in ways other than the determinant ones?

This book highlights different aspects of the political history of Kashmir with which the political life of Sheikh Mohammad Abdullah was intricately intertwined. Sheikh Mohammad Abdullah—the rebel, Kashmiri nationalist, and first Muslim Prime Minister of Jammu and Kashmir (J & K)—was one of the pioneers of the broadening of the political, economic, intellectual, and cultural horizon in the State and, toward the end of his life, predicted the diminishing of that horizon. Several themes regarding the politics of the antimonarchical movement in Kashmir and the politics of

self-determination as well as autonomy are reiterated in the speeches that I have reproduced in this book.

Sheikh Mohammad Abdullah reigned as Prime Minister of the State of J & K from 1948 to 1953. Sheikh Mohammad Abdullah, for better or worse, was a large presence on the political landscape of India for 50 years. In a fragmented sociopolitical and religious ethos, he represented the pluralism that would bind the people of J & K together for a long time. Such personages leave indelible marks of their work and contributions on societies for which they have tirelessly worked, and their work, for the most part, traverses religious, class, and party fault lines. To associate such personages with just one political party or one religious group amounts to an inexcusable trivialization. Given the militarization and rabid fragmentation of Kashmiri society, it becomes necessary to evoke the man who symbolized *Kashmiriyat* or pluralism in the face of divisive politics. It also becomes necessary for federal countries to reassess and reevaluate their policies vis-à-vis border states.

Even 35 years after his death, Sheikh Mohammad Abdullah remains the most idolized as well the most reviled political personage of Kashmir. My article on this phenomenon appeared in a few newspapers a couple of weeks ago. As I observed in that article, I am still amazed to see how much the intelligence agencies of India and Pakistan, which act covertly to influence the outcome of events, continue to invest in trying to erase the name, ideology, and work of one Kashmiri nationalist, Sheikh Mohammad Abdullah. Several state and non-state actors in Kashmir can and have been coopted, mellowed, and made to toe the line of the powers that be. Yet, the unfinished business of the powers to be on both sides of the Line of Control (LOC; India and Pakistan) to ride roughshod over the history of Kashmiri nationalism and the evolution of a political consciousness in Kashmir, which began much before 1989, continues unabated.

My detractors, as I painstakingly acknowledge in the abovementioned article, level the allegation that I “eulogize” Sheikh Mohammad Abdullah, but I believe, with the force of my conviction, that he, with all his contradictions, was a force to reckon with. He succeeded in making the politics of mass mobilization credible by merging it with the institutional politics of democracy.

I would like to believe that my opinions have evolved during the course of my research. And, in all honesty, I find Sheikh Mohammad Abdullah’s politics relevant even today. He, like the rest of us, had his flaws and shortcomings, but that doesn’t take away from his commitment to Kashmir.

I believe, without a shred of doubt, that in civilized societies, political dissent is not curbed and national integrity is not maintained by military interventions. I have said this earlier on other public platforms, and I am reiterating it because it is a viable conclusion to my response to this question. I reiterate that the more military officials get involved in issues of politics, governance, and national interest, the more blurred the line between national interest and hawkish national security becomes. Contrary to what the Indian military establishment is doing in J & K and the Northeast and what the Pakistani military establishment is doing in Balochistan, people must learn to work together across ethnic and ideological divides and insist that everyone be included in democratic decision-making. It is an egregious mistake and one that has severe ramifications to allow the military of a nation-state to bludgeon its democratic processes. And I cannot emphasize this point enough.

I discuss this issue in the classes that I teach and I wrote about this in my article on “Military Interventions in Democratic Spaces” as well. Instead of deterring the growth of democracy and depoliticizing the people, the goal should be to empower the populace of J & K sufficiently to induce satisfaction with the Kashmir constituency’s role within current geopolitical realities such that a dis-empowered populace does not succumb to ministrations of destructive political ideologies. In addition to addressing the political aspect of democracy, it is important to take cognizance of its economic aspect as well, which is exactly what Sheikh Mohammad Abdullah, a man far ahead of his time, did. The dominant perception of Kashmir as just an insurgent state within the Indian Union and not as a political unit with legitimate regional aspirations might benefit security hawks but will not do any long-term good.

Despite the diatribe, “quiet diplomacy,” and negotiations, has the political landscape of Kashmir, the nuclear flashpoint in South Asia, changed at all since 1953? How seriously do the governments of India and Pakistan take current regional political actors—state and non-state—in Kashmir? So, I thought I’d revisit a long-forgotten chapter of history, which, at the time, garnered tremendous international attention and condemnation of nation-states.

In 1947, India gained its independence from British rule and was partitioned into India and Pakistan. The State of J & K, which lies roughly north of both countries, acceded to India. The Indian government agreed to provide political and military aid to Kashmir under the condition of accession.

However, it was understood that once the warring subsided, a plebiscite would be held under United Nations auspices that would give the Kashmiri people the right to decide whether to stay with India or accede to Pakistan. Some Kashmiris felt an option for independence also should be added to the discussion since Kashmir had been autonomous before the invasion.

In 1948, my maternal grandfather, Sheikh Mohammad Abdullah, became prime minister of Kashmir, and by 1953 Abdullah, who was a strong advocate for Kashmiri independence, began to openly question whether the Indian government would organize the plebiscite since efforts had not been made to do so. Even though he took a peaceful approach, his display of skepticism—coupled with his ideas of an independent Kashmir—and the popularity it gained with others who shared his views, is what caused him to be deposed and imprisoned by the Indian government for the next 22 years, from 1953 until 1972.

He played a significant role in the consolidation of democratic elements in J & K, who had braved many a storm to bolster his fight for self-determination for the Kashmiri people. With the inception of the disintegration of the sociopolitical fabric of Kashmir in 1989, the values for which he had made great sacrifices slowly fell apart. I have watched Sheikh Mohammad Abdullah's ideology being made redundant not only by the militarized interventions of India and Pakistan but also by the fragmentation in Kashmiri society.

As I observed in *The Life of a Kashmiri Woman*, while harboring his heritage, culture, and values of the past, the Sheikh was well-aware of the exigencies of the present and had the courage to translate his vision into reality, thereby signaling the end of the chapter of peasant exploitation and subservience and opening a new chapter of peasant emancipation, and further instituting educational and social schemes for marginalized sections of society. When the pledge to hold a referendum was not kept by the Government of India, his advocacy of autonomy for the State led to his imprisonment.

This project gave me a chance to collect and collate my thoughts and earlier works, some pre-published, on the political reality of Kashmir, taking on a life of its own. I am reproducing updated versions of some of those earlier works below, including excerpts from my books, *Islam, Women, and Violence in Kashmir: Between India and Pakistan* and *The Life of a Kashmiri Woman* in order to help the reader, particularly undergraduate and graduate students in South Asian Studies programs,

contextualize the speeches and interviews reproduced in *Sheikh Mohammad Abdullah's Reflections on Kashmir*.

I quote from Sheikh Mohammad Abdullah's statement in the Court of the Sessions Judge in Srinagar, Kashmir, during the Quit Kashmir Trial of 1946:

The All India States People's Conference has clearly laid down that the old treaties between the States and the British government or its representatives are obsolete, and must end. That applies to all treaties including the Treaty of Amritsar, which has some special and unhappy features which make it a kind of sale-deed of the territory and people of Kashmir. This treatment of a people as a commodity which can be transferred for hard cash has all along been deeply resented by the Kashmiris, whether Hindu, Sikh, or Muslim. It hurts their national dignity. In practice, the peculiar nature of the Treaty of Amritsar has led to all kinds of discrimination against Kashmiris, resulting in their treatment as some kind of lower class. ("The Statement of Sher-e-Kashmir in the Court of the Sessions Judge, Srinagar," in *Kashmir on Trial: State vs. Sheikh Abdullah*)

The "Quit Kashmir" cry concretized the vociferous demand for the dissolution of a system of government which was in the process of being eliminated all over India. The movement for enfranchising the people was not about personal enmity or vendetta.

The defense counsel, Mr. Asif Ali, began his defense of the accused, Sheikh Mohammad Abdullah, with the main question, which

[i]n this case is whether it is the right of a people to demand responsible government even in emphatic terms if necessary .... Is it a crime to say that the basis of the government of this State should be the will of the people and not a treaty which is a hundred years old and which is impugnable in the highest International Court of Justice? This is the issue involved in this case and nothing less. ("The Statement of Sher-e-Kashmir in the Court of the Sessions Judge, Srinagar," in *Kashmir on Trial: State vs. Sheikh Abdullah*)

In an endeavor to enable the formation of representative governments in Indian states, the All India States People's Conference (AISPC) adopted a constitution in 1939 that underlined deploying legitimate means to help the people of the State form a responsible and representative government under the aegis of the monarch. Once the AISPC drafted and proclaimed its objectives, a number of organizations were formed in order to achieve

concretization of these objectives. Prior to that, intellectually and politically drawn to the nationalist reform movements of the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, Kashmiri Pandits, for example, formed a Hindu revivalist party; in Jammu, political organizations, whose hallmark was their exclusionary regionalism, were formed solely for Dogras, of which the Dogra Sabha, established in 1903, was the primary one. These organizations did not seek involvement just with political issues, but focused on social reform as well, particularly on improving the conditions of Hindu women. Kashmiri Muslims, led by their religious leader, the *mirwaiz*, Maulana Rasool Shah, formed the Anjuman-i-Nusrat-ul-Islam. Besides the dissemination of Islamic teachings, the Anjuman aimed at social reform and educational improvement for the Muslims of the Valley.

While the political mobilization of Kashmiri Muslims was still in an embryonic stage, it was pulverized by a governmental edict banning all Muslim organizations. The grievances of the Muslims were exacerbated by the labor crisis in the silk mill in Srinagar, Kashmir, which was owned by the monarch. Most of the underpaid, overworked, and shabbily treated laborers in the mill were Kashmiri Muslims (for details, see Ganju 1945). These widespread exploitative practices and the resentment engendered by them impelled eminent members of the Muslim community to voice their protest in a memorandum. The memorandum was presented to the Governor-General of India, Lord Reading, in October 1924: "In addition to specifying grievances, the memorandum called for an increase in Muslim employment, improved education, land reforms, protection of Muslim religious establishments from encroachment, the abolition of forced labor, equitable distribution of resources, a state constitution, and a legislative assembly that would give Muslims proper representation" (for an informative discussion, see Rahman 1996). When the first few Kashmiri Muslims to have obtained degrees at institutions of higher education, such as the Aligarh Muslim University in British India, returned to the State in the 1920s, they were imbued with "newfangled" ideas of nationalism, liberty, and democracy:

Things were now moving very fast in the Indian subcontinent. In December 1929, the Indian National Congress adopted, in Lahore, the resolution of complete independence as its goal; a mass civil disobedience movement followed which electrified the subcontinent from Gilgit to Cape Comorin. Kashmir too felt its repercussions; people began to be deeply excited with what was taking place in the rest of the country. And when a number of



Muslim young men—among them Sheikh Mohammad Abdullah—educated at different universities in India and deeply moved by the Congress struggle for freedom returned home, a spark was applied to the explosive matter which had accumulated in the Valley. (Bazaz [1967] 2005: 29)

A group of these young graduates, who were well educated but denied opportunities that would have enabled them to climb the socioeconomic ladder, started convening regular meetings at a house in Fateh Kadal, Srinagar, and from these seemingly innocuous gatherings evolved the “Fateh Kadal Reading Room Party.” Members of the Reading Room Party wrote articles for various publications in which they expressed resentment against the arbitrary and discriminatory practices of the monarchical regime.

The torch of cultural pride and political awakening in the princely state of J & K was lit by Sheikh Mohammad Abdullah, a prominent member of the Fateh Kadal Reading Room Party, in 1931: “Sheikh Abdullah was an imposing figure. His six feet four inches of height towered over his countrymen, and his intellect attracted the attention and respect of those who were associated with him in his revolutionary efforts” (Korbel 2002: 17). For the first time in decades, the Kashmiri people, particularly the Muslim population, acknowledged the leadership of a man who overtly challenged the hitherto impregnable authority of the maharaja. They responded to his politics with a zeal that was previously unknown. Despite persecution, the Sheikh continued to vociferously fight for the political, economic, and religious rights of the Kashmiri people. Here is what Sir Mohammad Iqbal, spearhead of the Punjabi–Kashmiri Muslim Movement said,

One thing which stands out clearly about Sheikh Muhammad Abdullah is that he has completely removed from the Muslims of Kashmir the fear of facing the Dogra army. But with your limited resources and comparatively the unlimited resources at the disposal of the monarch you cannot continue like this for a long time; therefore, the only way is to launch a movement in the Punjab and send volunteers from here because the Maharajah’s resources would not be sufficient to withstand such a movement for a long time; he will have to seek the assistance of the British government and when this assistance is sought and naturally made available, then would be the appropriate moment for us to demand that if they wanted to intervene on the side of the Maharaja, then they must equally ensure that important grievances of the State Muslims were also redressed. (M. Y. Saraf, *Kashmiris Fight for Freedom* 1979)

Ahmad Ullah Shah, the senior mirwaiz, had been unequivocally accepted by the Srinagar Muslims as their religious leader, and his authority had been ratified by the Dogra regime. When his nephew Muhammad Yusuf Shah assumed the leadership of the Jama Masjid in 1931, he had expected to don his uncle's mantle and exercise the same unquestioned authority. But, to his surprise, his stature was undermined by a young politician of obscure origins and revolutionary political opinions, the Sheikh. The Sheikh, a political greenhorn at that point, challenged the hegemony of the mirwaiz. As a strategy to eliminate the threat posed to his position by the Sheikh's rising popularity and clout, Yusuf Shah contemptuously labeled him a heretic. The Sheikh vociferously retaliated by aligning himself with Mirwaiz Hamadani. That political move widened the gap between the two *mirwaizeen* (religious leaders). A couple of months after the formation of the Muslim Conference (MC), Yusuf Shah founded the Azad Conference, and in April 1933, the Sheikh's *Sher* (lion) followers and Yusuf Shah's goatee-wearing *Bakra* (goat) followers fought a violent battle during the *Id-uz-Zuha* (religious festival) prayers. But Shah's attitude toward the Dogra monarchy and his inclination to toe the official line made him an unappealing figure to the repressed Muslim masses. He sank further into the morass of unpopularity by accepting a stipend of Rs. 600 from the Dogra regime. In the twilight of his political life, Shah reverted to the security of his priestly edifice (Copeland 1991: 248).

In 1931, Mirza Bashiruddin Mahmud Ahmad organized the work of the All India Kashmir Committee. At a meeting between Mirza Bashiruddin and Sheikh Muhammad Abdullah, it was decided that the Sheikh would lead the movement and Chaudhry Ghulam Abbas would be the secretary. The All India Kashmir Committee comprised representatives from the Kashmir Valley, Maulvi Abdur Rahim, and the Jammu Province, Allah Rakha Sagar. The duties allocated to the Committee were as follows: (1) to give financial support to the agitation; (2) to give financial assistance to the dependents of incarcerated political leaders, martyrs, and those wounded in the firings and *lathi* charges; (3) to arrange for medical treatment of the injured; (4) to arrange legal defense for political workers; and (5) to provide legal assistance to the preparation of cases before the Middleton and Glancy Commissions. It was through Dr. Iqbal that the Glancy Commission made its report advocating religious freedom in Kashmir and emphasizing that the Government could not exercise its authority at places of worship. It also mandated that education should be universal and more primary schools should be opened. It underscored the

need to appoint Muslims teachers and the establishment of a special office for the administration of educational institutions for Muslims. It emphasized that jobs should be advertised and employment be given to people in proportion to their population.

### 1.1 FORMATION OF THE ALL JAMMU AND KASHMIR MUSLIM CONFERENCE AND ITS SUBSEQUENT SECULARIZATION INTO THE NATIONAL CONFERENCE

The maharaja's policies and unwillingness to deploy quasi-democratic measures caused the uprising of 1933, which was put down with unwarranted belligerence. Subsequently, a civil disobedience movement was organized by the Sheikh and his ally, Chaudhry Ghulam Abbas, but the maharaja was adamant in his refusal to relent. The strident voice of the people, however, could not be drowned, and the first democratic election in the State was held in 1934.

In the years prior to 1938, the rallying banner and political ideology of the MC mobilized a collective sense of pride in regional identity. Sheikh Mohammad Abdullah had the political will and astuteness to create an efficiently organized network of young people who were committed to the party's ideology. His initial emphasis on a shared Muslim identity, which promised social and political enfranchisement, was a light at the end of the tunnel for an abject and politically disenfranchised people.

The formation of secular local political organizations that espoused a nationalist and socialist ideology in the 1930s and 1940s, such as the Kashmiri Youth League, Peasants Association, Students Federation, Silk Labour Union, Telegraph Employees Union, and so on, enabled popular political leaders to shift their focus on to the structural inequities legitimized by the State rather than on just religious and sectarian conflict. Although the MC won 14 out of 21 seats allotted to Muslim voters in the State Assembly, the Assembly had only consultative powers. Two years later, however, fresh elections were held, because the elected members of the legislature fiercely protested their restricted powers. The Sheikh's disillusionment with the supersession of nationalist aspirations by sectarian ones inspired him to forge a secular movement in the State. In order to disseminate his progressive ideas, the Sheikh and a Kashmiri Pandit secularist, Prem Nath Bazaz, founded an Urdu weekly, *Hamdard*, in 1935.

Consequently, the MC was replaced by the secular All Jammu and Kashmir National Congress (NC), presided over by the Sheikh, in June 1938.

History has borne witness to the inability of several stalwarts to achieve their ideals, because they took rigid and inflexible stands. So, in order to align itself with the purportedly secular and nationalist Indian National Congress, the younger generation of MC leaders strove to transform a religiously oriented political movement into a secular movement for political, economic, and social reforms. The nature of this transformation was articulated by the Sheikh in his address to the MC's annual session in March 1938:

We desire that we should be free to set our house in order and no foreign or internal autocratic power should interfere in our national and human birth-rights. This very demand is known as Responsible Government .... The first condition to achieve Responsible Government is the participation of all those people ... they are not the Muslims alone nor the Hindus and the Sikhs alone, nor the untouchables or Buddhists alone, but all those who live in this state .... We do not demand Responsible Government for 80 lakh Muslims but all the 100% state subjects .... Secondly, we must build a common national front by universal suffrage on the basis of joint electorate. (Quoted in Hassnain 1988: 88)

In 1944, the NC sought reconstitution of the political, economic, and social systems of J & K, and it came to be identified with socially leftist republicanism and the personality of the Sheikh (Bose 2003: 21). Its particular context of an indigenous political movement against the Dogra House helped the evolution of a distinct entity, which was Kashmiri nationalism.

This timely political move won the approbation and full-fledged support of emancipated Hindus and Muslims. The aim was to forge connections between the group's agenda for socioeconomic transformations with the agenda of other groups impacted by autocracy, feudalism, and communalism. Josef Korbél, the Czech chairman of the United Nations Commission for India and Pakistan, noted the prestige accorded to the Sheikh Abdullah-led NC in terms of the support it enjoyed at the organizational and grassroots level (Korbél 2002: 246). The Sheikh and his political organization fought tooth and nail against autocracy and demanded that the Treaty of Amritsar be revoked and monarchical rule ousted. He described the Dogra monarchy as a microcosm of colonial

brutality and the Quit Kashmir movement as a ramification of the larger Indian struggle for independence.

Despite the establishment of an executive council, council of ministers, and a juridical and legislative branch of public administration in the princely state of J & K, the maharaja retained his supreme authority. The Sheikh explicitly declared the antimonarchical stance of his organization to the British Cabinet Mission, which was to chart the course of India's destiny, including that of the princely states:

The fate of the Kashmiri nation is in the balance and in that hour of decision we demand our basic democratic right to send our elected representatives to the constitution-making bodies that will construct the framework of Free India. We emphatically repudiate the right of the Princely Order to represent the people of the Indian States or their right to nominate personal representatives as our spokesmen. ("Quit Kashmir Memorandum to the British Cabinet Mission on behalf of the All Jammu and Kashmir National Conference")

This well-articulated demand for the introduction of democratic measures was brazenly ignored by the administration as well as by the British Cabinet Mission.

## 1.2 THE QUIT KASHMIR MOVEMENT

Initially, the "Quit Kashmir" movement did not garner the support that the Sheikh had hoped for. The Quit Kashmir movement did not bolster the Sheikh's position among the members of the MC, and it antagonized the Hindus and Sikhs of the State, who venerated the maharaja because they owed him their political, economic, and religious privileges (Bazaz 1950: 4–5).

In May 1946 the Sheikh was sentenced to nine years in prison for having led the seditious Quit Kashmir movement against the maharaja's regime. His defense against the charges leveled at him during the infamous Quit Kashmir trial was an attempt to underline a strategic syncretism enabling legitimate opposition to autocratic rule:

Where law is not based on the will of the people, it can lead to the suppression of their aspirations. Such law has no moral validity even though it may be enforced for a while. There is a law higher than that, the law that represents the people's will and secures their well being; and there is the tribute

of the human conscience, which judges the ruler and the ruled alike by standards that do not change by the arbitrary will of the most powerful. To this law I gladly submit and that tribunal I shall face with confidence and without fear, leaving it to history and posterity to pronounce their verdict on the claims that I and my colleagues have made not merely on behalf of the four million people of Jammu and Kashmir but also of the ninety-three million people of all the States of India [under princely rule]. This claim has not been confined to a particular race or religion or color .... I hold that sovereignty resides in the people, all relationships political, social and economic, derive authority from the collective will of the people. (Quoted in Bhattacharjea 2008: 237–238)

Despite the support that the Quit Kashmir movement launched by the Sheikh's cadre received from some regional councils and state Congress committees, the movement was crushed tactically and militarily. On May 20, 1946, speaking at a public rally at the Shahi Masjid (mosque), Srinagar, the Sheikh thunderously condemned the 1846 Treaty of Amritsar, which had legitimized the Dogra possession of Kashmir (Copeland 1991: 251). In a telegram sent by the Sheikh to the members of the British Cabinet Mission, he declared that the sale deed of Amritsar conferred no privileges "equivalent to those claimed by states governed by treaty rights. 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."

As the NC made its support of secular principles and its affiliation with the All India National Congress more forceful, the gulf between the upholders of secularism and the guardians of an essential Muslim identity became wider. The MC characterized itself as representing the Muslim segment of society attempting to undermine the political dominance of the Dogra maharaja and create a state in which primacy would be given to Islamic laws and scriptures. In that environment, the NC found itself gasping for breath in the quagmire created by the maharaja's duplicitous policies. For example, the maharaja's government had passed a special ordinance introducing two scripts, Devanagari and Persian, in Kashmir's government schools, signaling the metaphoric dislocation of Kashmiri culture. Language was seen in relation to an array of matters: political, power, ethnicity, and cultural and psychological denigration. Also, the Jammu and Kashmir Arms Act of 1940 had prohibited all communities except Dogra Rajputs from owning arms and ammunition. Such communally

oriented policies created a rift between the Muslim leadership of the NC and their Hindu colleagues.

The rift within the organization was further widened by Mohammad Ali Jinnah's insistence that the Sheikh extend his support to the Muslim League and thereby disavow every principle he had fought for. His refusal to do so sharpened the awareness of the Muslim League that it would be unable to consolidate its political position without his support. Initially, the Congress supported the Quit Kashmir movement and later reinforced the Sheikh's position on plebiscite. The Congress advised the maharaja, right up to 1947, to gauge the public mood and accordingly accede to either India or Pakistan. Nehru's argument that Kashmir was required to validate the secular credentials of India was a later development. Jinnah refuted the notion that Pakistan required Kashmir to vindicate its theocratic status and did not make an argument for the inclusion of Kashmir in the new dominion of Pakistan right up to the eve of partition. As Navnita Chandha Behera (2006) writes, "If Kashmir was integral to the very idea of Pakistan, it is difficult to see why the Muslim League and the Muslim Conference did not ask the Maharaja to accede to Pakistan until as late as 25 July 1947." By then, politics in Kashmir had acquired a purposive nature. This new politics was devoid of the narrow limitations of religion, and it enabled the creation of a political collectivity. I posit that the Sheikh perceived the evolution of Kashmiri nationalism in world-historical terms, as opposed to a domestic issue. He didn't subscribe to the notion that a powerful global ideology like pan-Islamism, or communism, or fascism would effectuate a universal liberation. He advocated the creation of a political structure in which a popular politics of mass mobilization would be integrated with institutional politics of governance.

The decision to accede to either India or Pakistan placed Maharaja Hari Singh in a dilemma. Consequently, the maharaja disregarded the advice of the Congress and the British about the infeasibility of independence and opted for that choice because it would allow him to maintain his political paramourty. He was unable to recognize how independence would enhance the political and military vulnerability of the State. Hari Singh's decision to maintain his political paramourty, which didn't recognize the agency of his subjects, was supported by Pakistan, but not by India.

### 1.3 STANDSTILL AGREEMENT

On August 15, 1947, Maharaja Hari Singh's regime ratified a standstill agreement with the Government of Pakistan. This agreement stipulated that the Pakistan government assume charge of the State's post and telegraph system and supply the State with essential commodities. Given the political and personal affiliations of the Congress with the NC and its antipathy toward monarchical rule, the maharaja and his cohort considered it worthwhile to negotiate with Pakistan's Muslim League in order to maintain his princely status. But this already tenuous relationship was further weakened after the infiltration of armed groups from Pakistan into J & K. The validity of the division of India into the nation-states of India and Pakistan along religious lines was unequivocally challenged by Sheikh Abdullah. Abdullah's noncommunal politics were vindicated by the ruthlessness of the Pakistani tribal raiders' miscalculated attack, which drove various political forces in the State to willy-nilly align themselves with India. Although the raiders, or *Qabailis*, were unruly mercenaries, they were led by well-trained and well-equipped military leaders, who were familiar with the arduous terrain, and the raiders launched what would have been a dexterous attack if they had not been tempted to pillage and plunder on the way to the capital city, Srinagar (Dasgupta 1968: 95). The brutal methods of the raiders received strong disapprobation from the people of the Valley who had disavowed a quintessentially Muslim identity and replaced it with the notion of a Kashmiri identity. This political and cultural ideology underscored the lack of religious homogeneity in the population of Kashmir. The raiders antagonized their coreligionists by perpetrating atrocities against the local populace, including women and children.

I began the reproduction of an earlier work of mine with a quote from the statement of Sheikh Mohammad Abdullah in the Court of the Sessions Judge in Srinagar during the Quit Kashmir Trial in 1946, and I conclude the paper with another quote from the same statement. In a recognition of human agency and mediation, the Sheikh observed,

No State can succeed in raising the standard of its people's life without educating and training them to pursue creative and productive activities. The percentage of literacy in the State is 6, the percentage of higher education is 1, and the average income per capita is Rs. 11-/ per annum. This by itself is



an eloquent commentary on the system and structure of government to which the slogan “Quit Kashmir” is addressed.

The organization founded by him, the National Conference, in its current form, would do itself an enormous favor by acquainting itself with its history and politics of struggle and resistance. A politics of ad hocism is no substitute for a politics grounded in history. The National Conference, which once was a formidable institution, wasn’t built on a foundation of ease and privilege. There was a time when it completely identified with the people. Perhaps it is because of the selective amnesia in Kashmir that the Governments of India and Pakistan don’t take current political actors in J & K, state and non-state, very seriously. So, I thought I’d revisit a long-forgotten chapter of history, which, at the time, garnered tremendous international attention and condemnation of the arrogance of nation-states.

Sheikh Mohammad Abdullah’s release in January 1958, after an ignoble incarceration of four-and-a-half years, was welcomed by the populace of Kashmir with an unbounded ebullience, which was delineated in the *Time*, January 20, 1958:

At week’s end Sheikh Abdullah, wearing a long black funeral-black achkan over loose white pajamas, held on to the windshield of his jeep and waved to crowds lining the road and jamming the towns along the way as he rode to the capital at the head of a 30-car caravan. Srinagar welcomed him with a frightening din. When the Sheikh appeared on the balcony of a Moslem shrine, people prostrated themselves in a heap below, crying vows that they would lay down their lives for him.

From across the city, Premier Bakshi warned that Kashmir’s future was foreclosed, that his police would tolerate no challenge to law and order in “this border state of the Indian Union.

On April 22, 1958, the Special Correspondent of *The Times* of London wrote:

[O]ne’s impression on returning to the valley of Kashmir for the first time since Sheikh Abdullah was released is that he is still a power to be reckoned with. Alone, his principal colleagues and supporters all in gaol [sic], his every movement under police observation, his very presence is enough to deprive the present Kashmir Government of all peace of mind. Yet one cannot imprison a man indefinitely because he is admired and loved; nor presumably maintain in office a Government if it is unable to make itself either.

Although Bakshi Ghulam Mohammad, the then Head of Government in Kashmir, claimed that the Government had sufficient evidence to indict the Sheikh, his wife, Akbar Jehan, and their trusted colleagues, the Government would not bring them to trial, as that, Bakshi Ghulam Mohammad cunningly claimed, would encourage the dissemination of “Pakistani propaganda” and “other anti-Indian forces,” which the more-loyal-than-the-king premier would not brook. He audaciously reiterated the uncorroborated charge that the Sheikh had been the recipient of funds from Pakistan to, allegedly, fund the upkeep of “private forces of volunteers.” Bakshi, outrageously, contradicted himself when he accused the Sheikh of inciting subversive acts to disrupt public order and right after asserted that “the situation in Kashmir was absolutely normal and that there had been no demonstrations worth mentioning in protest against the rearrest” (*The Times*, May 6, 1958). The irony of Sheikh Mohammad Abdullah, an “Indian Muslim,” being put behind bars for voicing and advocating the right of self-determination “by the very Indians who won admiration and sympathy in the world in attaining their own” (Extracts from Commentary by Edward R. Murrow, May 1, 1958), wasn’t lost on the world community.

The rearrest of the Sheikh created a constituency for his and Akbar Jehan’s politics in those parts of the world that had lent moral support to India’s glorious struggle for freedom in 1947. An acclaimed American commentator profoundly noted, “It is ironic that the Lion of Kashmir who fought so long for freedom has been jailed again by a freedom-loving state. The Lion exemplifies the spirit of Thoreau, who said, ‘I was not born to be forced.’ And Norman Corwin once wrote, ‘Freedom isn’t something to be won and then forgotten. It must be renewed like soil after yielding good crops’” (Murrow, in broadcast over *CBS Radio Network*, May 1, 1958). Kashmir cast serious doubt on the veracity of the Preamble to the Constitution of India. *The Chicago Daily Tribune* was just as unequivocal in its criticism of the Sheikh’s detention as other international commentators and political analysts:

His [Sheikh Mohammad Abdullah] arrest was under Nehru Government’s Preventive Detention Act, which permits Indian authorities to hold a suspect up to [sic] ten years without lodging formal charges. Abdullah has been making himself unpopular by demanding that the people of Kashmir be permitted to decide their own future by a plebiscite.

Abdullah's record of arrests in the days of the British rule rivals that of Nehru himself. In a recent letter to Nehru, Abdullah remarked that the Prime Minister had turned the Vale of Kashmir into a political graveyard and was treating prisoners as if they were in a Nazi concentration camp. He may wonder whether there has been any significant advance toward freedom since Mr. Nehru dispossessed the British. All that has happened is that Abdullah has become a martyr in the cause of liberty under Britain's heir. (May 5, 1958)

It did not take a skeptic to question India's democratic credentials. Unlike the politicians in Kashmir today, separatist and mainstream, Sheikh Mohammad Abdullah had been arrested for "his political leaning which runs counter to the Government of India in Kashmir .... Sheikh Abdullah was never known for resorting to or even calling for violence; all that he had called for was that the people of Kashmir should be given their just right and that they should not be oppressed" (*Al-Zaman*, May 7, 1958).

Sheikh Mohammad Abdullah forcefully countered the allegation of breach of pledge leveled against him by the Government of India in 1953 and later in 1958:

With all the force at my command, I repudiate this allegation and submit that the responsibility for breach of pledges rests elsewhere. A pledge is not a one-sided affair .... When the charge of the breach of faith is, therefore, leveled against me, I have a right to pose the question as to where lies the responsibility for not implementing the promises and assurances given by the Government of India to the State of Jammu and Kashmir from the date of the tribal raid until my arrest in 1953. (Abdullah, "Breach of Pledge," 31-32)

He did not desist from trying to find a solution to the Kashmir conflict which would be in accordance with "the freedom struggle of Kashmir and the independence movement of the Indian people" (Abdullah, "The Kashmiri Viewpoint," 41). Rule by *carte blanche*, either by mainstream politicians or by separatist politicians, is dangerous.

Although Sheikh Mohammad Abdullah's political strategies, dialogues with the Indian and Pakistani states, negotiations, and political accommodations have been deprecated by his critics, his leadership, perseverance, patience in treading a lonely path, and fighting a long-drawn battle that led to several years of incarceration need to be viewed in the light of the volatile geopolitical situation of the Indian subcontinent. The Kashmir

conflict remains as refractory and cantankerous today as it was in his lifetime, with a plethora of political actors and stakeholders—regional, national, and international. Sheikh Mohammad Abdullah’s speeches and interviews, a lot of which I had to dig out from the catacombs of history, offer the South Asianist, the historian, the political scientist, the sociologist, the diplomat, the statesman, and the lay person a rich and multilayered narrative of the construction and evolution of Kashmiri identity, the dilemma that a statesperson is, and the intricacies of the politics of nation-states in which demands for selfhood and autonomy become misshapen but remain irrepressible.

The cultural identity of the Kashmiri people is damaged by the erosion of their autonomous institutions, by traumas and terrors generated by insurgency and counterinsurgency.

The tradition of Rishiism and Sufism must not be allowed to die in the Valley: it continues to bolster a cultural and religious identity that the militarization of Kashmir has not been able to do away with. At the risk of sounding repetitive, I emphasize that any unitary discourse that claims to encompass the reality of Kashmir would be lop-sided and suspect. So, it is time that ideological divides are bridged in order to commence the work of building a nation.

## Letters

### 2.1 LETTER TO THE UNITED NATIONS SECURITY COUNCIL, 1953

*In a detailed letter to the UN Security Council written during his imprisonment, Sheikh Abdullah clearly outlined the steps leading up to the coup d'état of 1953:*

To: The Hon'ble Members  
Security Council,  
United Nations' Organisation,  
New York.  
Your Excellencies,

1. Fast developing events indicate that the nine-year old Kashmir question is very likely to come up for your consideration very soon, and in all probability you will give your most earnest attention to it with a view to affect a final settlement of the Dispute. Quite naturally, on such an important occasion I would have very much liked to be able to personally present before your Excellencies some outstanding aspects of the question and explain the urgent and immediate need for a final settlement and early termination of the protracted agony of my people. But that is not to be! Your Excellencies are perhaps aware that I am completing my third year of incarceration in a detention camp in the State where I have been whisked off as a result of coup-d'état of 9th Aug. 1953. Accordingly, the only course available to me is to send out this letter and pray for Your

Excellencies indulgence in the hope that facts stated here will receive Your Excellencies' earnest consideration.

2. As a spear-head of people's struggle against autocracy and economic exploitation I led a powerful mass-movement in Kashmir for over two decades. This movement which passed through various troubles and tra-  
vails had always 'sovereignty of the people' as its bed-rock. Many of our comrades-in-arms laid their lives for this cherished goal and many others went through great sufferings in the pursuit thereof. With the tragic partition of the sub-continent of India, though the flames of communal orgy engulfed the sub-continent, taking a heavy toll of human life, the State of Jammu and Kashmir kept its head cool and considerably succeeded in maintaining communal harmony in Kashmir. Unfortunately, however, the partition of India did not wholly spare Kashmir from its after effects and a tribal invasion on the State from the North-West followed in 1947. Under the stress of this invasion the then Maharaja of Kashmir appealed to India for armed intervention.

3. In order to make military intervention from India legally possible the Maharaja had to sign an instrument of Accession with India. This accession was, however, declared by India only a provisional and the disposal of the State was finally to be made in accordance with the free will of the people. On 27th Oct. 1947 Lord Mountbatten the then Governor General of India wrote to Maharaja in reply to his letter offering accession of the State with India that '... as soon as law and order have been restored in Kashmir and its soil cleared of the invader, the question of State's accession should be settled by a reference to the people'.

4. On 2nd Nov. 1947 Pt. Jawaharlal Nehru, Prime Minister of India in his broadcast speech declared 'We are anxious not to finalize anything in a moment of crisis and without the fullest opportunity to be given to the people of Kashmir to have their say. ...The accession must be made by the people of that State. ...We will not and cannot back out of it.' (See Appendix No. 2).

5. On behalf of India there are innumerable commitments made to the United Nations Organisation as well as to the people of Kashmir that the latter alone can decide their fate through an impartial plebiscite. Thus, India came to Kashmir as the champion and protector of our right of self-determination and under that slogan fought back the invaders with our support.

6. On 13th Aug. 1948 and later on 5th Jan. 1949 the U.N. Commission on India and Pakistan passed two historic resolutions incorporating the

solemn agreements of the two countries that accession shall be decided through a free and impartial plebiscite under the aegis of U.N. organisation. These international commitments to the people of Kashmir are categorical and unambiguous.

7. In 1951 a Constituent Assembly was convened in the Indian-occupied part of the State with a view to give constitutional shape to the Govt. Pakistan, suspecting backdoor decision on accession through this Constituent Assembly, took strong exception in the Security Council to the convening of this Assembly and its competence to decide the question of accession. Sir B. N. Rau, leader of the Indian Delegation in the United Nations, in his speeches before the Security Council delivered on 12th and 29th March 1951, made the object of the Assembly abundantly clear and declared unequivocally that in reference to accession the Constituent Assembly can take no decision and his Government will be bound by her commitments made to the United Nations in this regard. The Security Council on the basis of this international commitment registered its verdict on these terms '... and any action that Assembly might attempt to take to determine the future shape and affiliation of the entire State, or any part thereof would not constitute a disposition of the State in accordance with the above principle' (Resolution of Security Council of March 1951). Pt. Jawaharlal Nehru while answering questions in the Indian parliament in Feb. 1955 characterised the Kashmir Assembly's pronouncement on accession as 'unilateral and therefore of no consequence'.

7. Meanwhile the Security Council had suggested that the two countries should try to effect a peaceful settlement of this dispute through direct negotiations.

8. As leader of the National Conference prompted by the sole desire of facilitating a settlement with due regard to the wishes of the people I, in consultation with the Executive of my organisation and with the full approval of a top-level committee nominated by the Executive of the National Conference for the purpose, drew up a list of possible alternative means of settlement of this dispute.

Accordingly, I communicated these alternatives to the Prime Minister of India early in July 1953, so that in the forthcoming talks between the two Prime Ministers of India and Pakistan our approach to the peaceful settlement of the dispute would not be lost sight of. Unfortunately India did not seem to like this and turned hostile.

9. A deep and carefully screened conspiracy against me and my followers was the result. Kashmir, unfortunately, is the root cause which deeply

embitters the relations between India and Pakistan and in any conflict this State is bound to be the first casualty. No peaceful progress is possible within the State unless this dispute is finally and amicably settled. These are weighty considerations and no one who has the real good of the State at heart can lose sight of these factors. For some time past I had therefore been pressing for an early settlement of this dispute with Pakistan. ... Indian reaction was averse to this approach and her resentment towards me gradually culminated in positive hostility.

10. Disruption and factionalism in our ranks and corruption of our people was therefore resorted to by India for breaking our unity and thus achieving its nefarious end. The plot culminated in the coup-d'état on 9th Aug. 1953. In the early hours of that night I and my cabinet were dismissed without a confidence motion of the Assembly by the legally and constitutionally questionable fiat of the Head of the State. I was put under arrest along with another Minister of my cabinet and am now under continued detention nearly for the last three years without trial and without even a charge.

11. Simultaneously with my arrest thousands of my followers and co-workers, including Deputy Ministers, high ranking Gazetted Officers, respectable businessmen, lawyers, Members of the Assembly and public men of high position in life were clapped into prison. All manner of repressive measures were let loose in order to crush the spontaneous uprising of the people throughout the valley. Indian Central Reserve Police and army as well as the militia, and the special police were given a free licence to shoot at sight and commit all other possible atrocities on the defenceless people—thousands were beaten or starved in the jails in order to break them into submission—the number of those killed was officially reported to be 36 although the public version puts it very much higher. No judicial enquiry was held to investigate into these atrocities which include among their victims even pregnant women and children. More than a score of Assembly members was detained without charge and many others kept under house arrest.

12. It was under these bloodcurdling circumstances that a session of the Assembly was called to record its approval of the coup and a vote of confidence in the new government. From prison I sent telegraphic requests to the President of the Union of India, to its Prime Minister and to the Speaker of the Assembly to allow me to appear before the House and face a motion of no-confidence in a democratic manner but no heed was paid to it. Thus almost with a pistol on the necks of the Assembly



Members and with massacre and terrorism all over the Valley, a vote of confidence for the Govt. pitchforked into office with the help of Indian bayonets was secured. No greater fraud on democracy can be conceived! What moral, legal or constitutional value this fraudulent act has need hardly be explained.

13. Thus India manoeuvred to remove those elements from the Kashmir scene which she thought stood in the way of her anti-Kashmiri designs and subsequently sought ratification of accession through the Assembly. To say the least, it is a fraud upon the people, betrayal of their right of self-determination and gross breach of international commitments and promises.

15. In March 1956, the Prime Minister of India made a public declaration ruling out plebiscite in Kashmir. It has shocked the world conscience and stunned the people of Kashmir to whom innumerable assurances had been held out that they will shape their own destiny through a fair and impartial plebiscite.

Reasons advanced for this face volte are that Pakistan has Joined SEATO, received Arms Aid from America and signed the Baghdad Pact. The absurdity of the argument is patent. Whatever Pakistan may do or might have done, that can be no valid reason for denying the Kashmiris the exercise of their right of self-determination in order to shape their own future. Secondly India's Prime Minister has hinted that a vote in favour of Pakistan will rouse communal passions in India and endanger the security of its Muslim minority. This argument is also untenable. Is India's secularism so skin deep that it will collapse like a pack of cards as soon as Kashmiris exercise their right of self-determination. One may as well ask: Are Kashmiris to be held as hostages for fair treatment of Muslim minority under the so-called Secular Democracy of India. Were India's oft repeated promises to the people of Kashmir that they alone shall have the right to decide their own future through an impartial and fair plebiscite intended to be implemented only in case a vote in her favour was certain?

India has repeatedly claimed that Kashmir is fast progressing and that the political uncertainty has ended. Nothing can be farther from truth. Kashmir is at present ruled by monstrous laws which have crippled all political and social life in the State and paralysed all progress. A lawless law of Preventive Detention has been promulgated in the State with the sanction of the President of the Republic of India which has stifled all civil liberties. This law authorizes arrests and detention for a period of five years

without trial or even without disclosing the grounds of detention. Free and frequent use is made of this law of the jungle. Respectable citizens and political workers have been arrested under this law on the excuse of having publicized the speeches of opposition members delivered in the legislature or even legitimately organising support for the opposition in the House. Members of the Assembly who expressed their intention of crossing the floor in the House were put under arrest. In certain cases resignations were extorted under the pressure of this monstrous law and instances are not wanting where the members were publicly threatened of getting them involved in fabricated criminal cases if they failed to support the Govt. party.

Indian money is being lavishly used for organising gangsters for looting, insulting and publicly flogging respectable citizens who do not see eye to eye with the ruling party. Colossal amounts borrowed on interest from India are used in corrupting public life and thereby purchasing the public conscience. It is however, gratifying to note that all these dirty methods have so far failed to corrupt the people into submission, and with one voice they demand the fulfillment of the promise made to them by India, Pakistan and United Nations to exercise their right of self-determination in a free and democratic manner.

The Indian press almost without exception is positively hostile to all tendencies in favor of the plebiscite. Any Indian newspaper writing in favor of the fulfillment of the promise held out by India to the people of Kashmir or criticizing the present administration in Kashmir is immediately bribed or blacklisted and its entry into the State banned. Foreign correspondents are seldom allowed in and if and when such a journalist finds his way to the Valley every precaution is taken that he does not get a peep into the realities of the situation. There is a virtual Iron Curtain over the Valley. No citizen dare to approach a visitor to acquaint him with the tale of his misery for fear of gestapo and subsequent torture. I challenge anyone to refute it. Under an impartial agency the scathing sea of resentment of Kashmiris will be unleashed and a real picture will come to light in those circumstances alone. Recent civic elections held in Srinagar and in Jammu afford a proof positive of oppressive and fraudulent practices of the ruling party in Kashmir. Muslim organizations and political bodies with overwhelming Muslim membership completely boycotted these elections. Some Hindu opposition organizations however contested these elections

against the ruling party. The Hindu press both in and outside the State has published a surprising account of corruption, malpractices, impersonation and fraudulent methods used in these elections by the ruling party. It was through these shady means that the ruling party has secured all the seats in the Srinagar Municipal Corporation and majority in the Jammu Corporation.

15. Kashmiris are facing untold miseries during the present phase of their history. No progress—economic or political—is possible under such circumstances. Kashmir has become an oozing sore in the body politic of the sub-continent. It has embittered beyond measure relations between the two countries. The two armies facing each other across the cease-fire line constitute a potential powder magazine which may flare up any time into a devastating war. Its consequences are too grim to imagine. In such an eventuality Kashmir will be wiped out completely—and far worse may happen. Is the world conscience so dead as not to wake up in time?

If a member of the world organization is so easily to denounce international commitments and trample over without qualms the human rights of millions it will, I am afraid, deal a death blow on the effectiveness of the Security Council, will shock the confidence of small nations in the world organization and endanger world peace.

17. On behalf of the millions of Kashmiris and in the name of peace and progress of hundreds of millions of the sub-continent I appeal to your Excellencies to firmly stand by the pledges of the Security Council and execute its decision. I also appeal to the freedom loving countries of the world, to those who have signed the United Nations Charter and pledged themselves to honor it in word and deed as well as to those nations whose leaders have fought and given their lives to establish people's right of self-determination, to rise above international differences and disputes and lend a firm and unanimous support to the right of four million down-trodden Kashmiris and allow them to decide their own future in a free and democratic atmosphere. That alone will end the agony of the people of Kashmir and eliminate a grave danger to peace.

Yours sincerely,

(Signed)

S. M. ABDULLAH

2.2 LETTER TO CHAUDHRY NOOR HUSSAIN, CHAIRMAN  
OF DEFENSE COMMITTEE FOR SHEIKH MOHAMMAD  
ABDULLAH AND HIS COLLEAGUES, FROM SPECIAL JAIL,  
JAMMU, 25TH JANUARY, 1960

My Dear Chaudhry Sahib,  
Assalam-O-Alikum,

I have received your letter of January, 1960, which was brought here by Mr. Abdul Rahman. He also had an interview with me and Beg Sahib the other day. We have thus had a broad account of your organization in the United Kingdom. Naturally, all of us are grateful for your solicitude for the cause of Kashmiris, and for what the organization is reported to be doing to sponsor that cause. In fact, it is a common cause and, as you rightly say, all of us must march in step.

You are aware of our people's struggle for freedom carried on through the last three decades. Destiny left it to me to spear-head that struggle through suffering and sacrifices, in which particularly people of the Valley, Poonch, and Mirpur had the major share. It has been my proud privilege to suffer with my people and for them. Nothing can be a nobler and higher aim of human life than a dedication to the cause of emancipation of an enslaved and down-trodden people. When a cause is noble and great it calls for commensurate sacrifices, and those wedded to it have to offer them ungrudgingly. Ever since 1931, when the national movement was launched, our ideal has been the right of self-determination for the people of the State, and to that end I am contributing my humble bit. The present is just a stage in that struggle.

This right of self-determination of a people is no new slogan, much less is it a novel demand. It is a universally recognized right, and is the anchor-sheet of the United Nations' Charter. Every civilized nation in the world endorses it unreservedly for every subjugated people. In fact, its denial in word or deed has always led to devastating wars and manslaughter of millions. Its sanctity and gravity cannot, therefore, be exaggerated. Yet, Kashmiri people are today suffering incalculable hardships for the achievement of this right, otherwise conceded to every nation. But as a soldier in struggle for a noble cause, I have no grouse against the suffering. Every objective has a price to be paid for.

With the dawn of freedom in this subcontinent, unfortunately the question of Kashmir was hung on, and for the last twelve years it has bedeviled Indo-Pakistan relations. In the process of wrangling, the State

has got artificially partitioned, which has crippled the social and economic life and also paralyzed political advancement of either side of the cease-fire line. Thus economically, politically, and socially, it is a disrupted State whose development in any sphere has been rendered impossible.

In 1947, soon after the two Sovereign Independent States—India and Pakistan—were born, Gandhiji had unequivocally declared that, “... The Princes being the creation of British Imperialism, and the British having quit India, the people in the States were their own masters and Kashmiris must, therefore, decide, without any coercion, or show of it, from within or without, to which Dominion it should belong.” It was his political heir, Pt. Jawaharlal Nehru, who during the crisis of 1947 carried on a relentless campaign for focusing the world’s attention on the right of self-determination of the people of Kashmir. Without mincing words, he unreservedly endorsed the stand that it is the people of the State of Kashmir alone who can in a free and impartial plebiscite decide their future affiliation with India or Pakistan. He completely ruled out even the Maharaja’s authority to take a decision on the accession issue. On 2nd November, 1947, he declared, “... We have declared that the fate of Kashmir is ultimately to be decided by the people. The pledge we have given, and the Maharajah has supported it, not only to the people of Kashmir but to the world. We will not and cannot back out of it. We are prepared when peace and law and order have been established to have referendum held under the auspices of an international body like the United Nations ...”

Coming as these words did from a world statesman of the stature of Pt. Jawaharlal Nehru, Kashmiris have always had full faith in his respect for his promise. He has not only often reiterated this promise after the accession question arose, but has personally contributed tangibly to the Kashmir struggle for the right of self-determination of its people during our movement against the Maharajah. It was the reflection of his policy, as the distinguished Prime Minister of India, that late Shri Gopaldaswami Ayyangar told the Security Council on 15th January, 1948, that, “Whether she (Kashmir State) should withdraw from her accession to India, and either accede to Pakistan or remain Independent, with a right to claim admission as a member of the United Nations—all this we have recognized to be a matter for the unfettered decision by the people of Kashmir after normal life is restored to them.” This commitment has during the last twelve years been reiterated almost innumerable times, and on 7th August, 1952, Pt. Jawaharlal Nehru bluntly told the Indian Parliament, “With all deference to this parliament, I would like to say that the ultimate decision will

be made in the hearts of men and women of Kashmir and not in this Parliament or at the United Nations. First of all, let me say clearly that we accept the basic proposition that the future of Kashmir is going to be decided finally by the goodwill and pleasure of her people ...”

Enunciating her Kashmir policy regarding accession, the Government of India presented a White Paper to the Parliament in 1948, in which she declared, “The question of accession is to be decided finally in a free plebiscite, on this there is no dispute. There will be no victimization of any native of the State, whatever his/her political view may be, and no Kashmiri will be deprived of the right to vote.

When the Kashmir accession issue went to the Security Council, India reiterated her plebiscite pledge, and Pakistan fell in line. Thus, not only both the countries of India and Pakistan, but the world organization as well held that the only solution to the problem was to concede the right of self-determination to the people of Jammu and Kashmir State through an impartial plebiscite to be held under United Nations auspices.

Unfortunately, India and Pakistan got bogged down into minor details of plebiscite arrangements. And this has led to the miseries of 4 million people of the State. For the last twelve years, the gulf between India and Pakistan has widened, and in the process the people of Kashmir have been crushed in every conceivable manner. As you rightly said, “The Kashmiri people are left bereft of all human dignity, democracy, and the much spoken of basic human rights.” And what is their “Crime”—other than the demand for the right of self-determination—a right repeatedly promised to them, and to the world at large, both by India and Pakistan. They are barely asking for the implementation of these promises. In return—and how tragic it is—they have received bullets and ruthless repression, long sordid years of incarceration, and other inhuman tortures. I, as the spearhead of their movement, have been under detention for nearly seven years now (excluding a brief period of four months in early 1958), and a large number of my colleagues are going through years of incarceration. It is difficult to describe what suffering our people outside are facing. But as I have said, no objective can be achieved without paying the price.

Whatever our lot in this tragic struggle may be, we should never harbor any bitterness. Fortunately there is none in my mind against anyone. Bitterness contaminated the cause, wars the mind, and distorts the vision. Those who espouse a noble cause must avoid bitterness at any cost. We owe it to our conscience and to the cause. Moreover, against whom should one be bitter? After all, we are a part and parcel of the subcontinent. Our peace

and prosperity is inextricable wedded with the peace and prosperity of the millions in India and Pakistan. In spite of the physical delineation of the boundaries, we all live in one zone. Our hopes, aspirations, fears, and dangers are the same. In the happiness and prosperity of India and Pakistan lies the peace and prosperity of people of the State. It would not be too much to say that, God forbid, if India and Pakistan go down Kashmir cannot survive.

You will appreciate, I hope, that as long as Indo-Pakistan relations remain strained, not only will the solution of the Kashmir question recede further and further into the background, but even the peace in the sub-continent will hang by a thin thread. Such a situation is obviously fraught with disastrous consequences not only for India and Pakistan but even for the whole of Asia. Kashmir is a tiny speck which may be wiped out of existence any moment. Thus, we must look at this question in the broad perspective and urge a settlement accordingly. In the friendly relations of India and Pakistan lies the future of our State. We want a lasting and peaceful settlement of this question, reflecting the wishes of the people. Therein lies honor, peace, and progress for all concerned.

As for the case going on against us, I have had a general talk with Mr. Rehman. He will be carrying a letter from Mr. Latif also. The commitment proceedings have taken too long, and the end is not yet in sight. It may be two or three months, hence, when the trial actually begins. As for the counsel, I have given him my mind. Mr. Latif will keep you posted regularly about both the progress of the case and the defense arrangements. Mr. Rehman has been given a broad idea of immediate requirements here.

Beg sahib send you and your colleagues your best wishes. Of course he shares the views expressed here. My other colleagues send you their best regards.

We are all well. Convey my regards to your colleagues.

Yours sincerely,  
Sheikh Mohammad Abdullah

Ch. Noor Hussain,  
762 Coventry Road,  
Small Heath, Birmingham 10  
United Kingdom

(Censored—Signed Boota Singh,  
Superintendent,  
Special Jail, Jammu.)

### 2.3 LETTER TO INDIAN PREMIER LAL BAHADUR SHASHTRI, MARCH 17, 1965

Flat no. 224,  
St. James Court,  
London –S. W. 1  
March 17, 1965

My dear Shashriji,

The very day I arrived in London, I heard the disquieting news of the widespread arrests made by the Jammu and Kashmir government after my departure from Srinagar. Information since received indicates that these arrests have not only been made on a very large scale throughout the Valley and also in Jammu, but that they are accompanied with the usual repression and manhandling of the victims. I need hardly say that this course is not only unfortunate but also further complicates the already unhappy situation in Kashmir.

Ever since 1953, when I was deposed and arrested, a policy of repression and oppression has been followed in Kashmir, because of which thousands of my followers and sympathizers have heavily suffered. Apart from the untold sufferings that Kashmir had to go through, this policy made things worse and rendered a solution to the Kashmir problem all the more difficult. It further embittered Indo-Pak relations and also added to cold-war tensions. Fortunately, however, Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru at long last realized the futility of this policy by taking a bold stand and calling a halt to it. He released me and my colleagues from prison, and invited me for talks to Delhi. You are aware of the long discussions we had on the Kashmir question and the desirability of finding an amicable settlement of this dispute. My talks with him convinced me of his genuine desire to find a solution to the problem. It was at his instance that I went to Pakistan in order to pursue my mission of bringing about an honorable and equitable solution. I was heartened to find that President Ayub Khan fully shared the desire for such a settlement. But, unfortunately, when a meeting between him and Panditji was arranged, the latter passed away. As a result, naturally, the progress of my mission was held up. I knew that as Panditji's successor in office, you would take some time to give things stability before you took up the threads where Panditji had left them. Accordingly, I waited anxiously for the moment when we could resume our joint efforts to bring about a settlement of the dispute.



Naturally, it was in the interest of the parties concerned from doing anything that would vitiate the atmosphere and make a settlement difficult. I, therefore, hoped that the Indian government would, at least, help in maintaining the statusquo, until the task that we had taken in hand during Panditji's life was resumed. Nothing, it was expected, will be done in Kashmir that would create tension or give a set-back to the hope that people still entertained for an amicable settlement. Unfortunately, this was not to be. The government of India took certain steps vis-à-vis Kashmir which gave a clear indication that no settlement was intended. The statements of responsible members of government declaring their intention to erode the content and spirit of Article 370, the application of Articles 356 and 357 (Indian Constitution), and also the oft-repeated characterization of accession of the State as "final and irrevocable" are instances in point which gave a serious set-back to a measure of confidence that we had built during the last days of Pandit Nehru. They clearly showed that the government of India, far from going ahead to pursue the revised Kashmir policy initiated by Panditji, was actually moving in the reverse direction and, in fact, undoing what had been done. I can hardly describe the sorrow and pain that this course of events has caused me and other patriots in both India and Pakistan. The present arrests in Kashmir, coming as they do in the wake of the said policy, have naturally caused me great concern. In these circumstances, a question naturally arises: are all the expectations of an amicable settlement to the dispute to be ruled out, and are, therefore, the declarations so frequently made about the desire to settle the dispute peacefully, without foundation? I still hope that such is not the case.

Unfortunately, the relations between India and Pakistan have been bedeviled by this dispute. It is an oozing sore which is responsible for a colossal drain on the depleted resources of the two countries, and it is on account of this dispute that they cannot play their effective role in world counsels. Apart from that, its most tragic aspect is that 5½ million people of the State have been passing through troubles and tribulations for the past 17 years. Their economic life has been crippled and legitimate political activity paralyzed. The uncertainty and insecurity that like the sword of Damocles hangs over the people of this State has continuously put in jeopardy peace and prosperity in that region. I cannot conceive of more compelling reasons for an early and amicable settlement of this dispute. I have, several times, had the occasion of discussing this problem with

you and your colleagues, and, therefore, do not want to take up your time by dilating on this issue. I strongly feel that the large-scale arrests referred to above cannot be justified. The victims are mostly members of the Plebiscite Front, which is the largest mass organization functioning in the State. True, its avowed objective is to resolve the accession tangle by a free and fair plebiscite, a stand to which both India and Pakistan have committed themselves in and outside the United Nations. This is a legitimate and most constitutional objective. This organization has always declared its faith in peaceful non-communal policies and programs. I know that on several occasions, even in the recent past, when the peace of the State was seriously threatened, it is the members of this organization whose strenuous efforts helped maintain peace and communal harmony. Many a time this was acknowledged by members of the Kashmir administration.

In this haul-up, even Majlis-e-Auqaf Islamia, a purely religious institution, has not been spared. Its chairman, Khwaja Ali Shah, along with many other members has been put behind bars. Again, Maulana Farooq, President of the Awami Action Committee, Maulana Mohammad Yasin Hamadani, former President of Holy Relic Action Committee, as also several other members of the Committee, have been whisked off to prison. Qari Saif-ud-Din of the Jammāt-i-Islami is yet another victim in this swoop. Office bearers and members of student and youth federations have also been rounded up. The only "sin" of these respectable citizens and their organizations is that they stand by the right of self-determination of the pledges given in that behalf by India and Pakistan. Otherwise, they have committed no crime. Nobody knows better than you how scrupulously peaceful and non-communal the program of the Holy Relic Action Committee during the most critical period in 1963 and 1964 was, when millions of people in Kashmir joined the movement for the restoration of the Holy Relic. It is preposterous to accuse these organizations of violence and communal bigotry. The only reason for this general swoop is that the government does not tolerate the demand for self-determination.

It is most tragic that the Kashmir government should choose to suppress its political opponents, as they are doing in the present circumstances, by recourse to oppressive laws like the Defense of India Rules, which, on the face of it, can have no relation even to the allegations officially made against those imprisoned. You might have heard that members of the National Conference in the Jammu and Kashmir Assembly recently accused the

government of arresting the people for merely refusing to join the Congress party in Kashmir. No country having respect for democratic procedures can justify such action. Gleaning through some of the press reports that have reached me from India (Hindustan Times and Indian Express), I find that the Kashmir government has “failed to explain adequately,” the reasons that led to large-scale results and “the drastic punishment.” Obviously, they have no reason, except to victimize their political opponents.

I would earnestly request you to kindly take up the matter in your hands, and, at least, undo the steps taken by the J & K government, and, thereby, help create the vitiated atmosphere in Kashmir.

With kindest regards,

Yours sincerely,  
S. M. Abdullah

#### 2.4 LETTER TO PRESIDENT AYUB KHAN OF PAKISTAN, SEPTEMBER 1, 1967

In the name of God, most Gracious, most Merciful.

C/ O Deputy Commissioner  
Delhi, 1<sup>st</sup> September, 1967

My dear Khan Sahib,

May the peace and blessings of Allah be upon you.

While giving your views on a proposed South Asian Confederation in your book, *Friends Not Masters*, you have, among other things, said:

When Sheikh Abdullah and Mirza Mohammad Afzal Beg came to Pakistan in 1964, they too had brought the absurd proposal of confederation between India, Pakistan, and Kashmir. I told them plainly we should have nothing to do with it. It was curious that whereas we were seeking the salvation of Kashmiris, they had been forced to mention an idea which, if pursued, would lead to our enslavement. It was clear that this was what Mr. Nehru had told them to say. I do not blame them, because they were obviously acting under the compulsion of circumstances. But they left me in no doubt that their future was linked with Pakistan.

In order to keep the record straight, I would request you to refresh your memory as to what actually I told you when I met you along with Mirza Afzal Beg, for I find certain discrepancies in your statement above.

We never carried with us any cut and dry proposals for the solution of the Kashmir dispute and, to be fair to the late Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru, he never forced us to put before you any particular proposal. No, we are not made that way. My sole purpose in visiting Pakistan and meeting you was to persuade you to agree to a summit meeting with the Prime Minister of India, so that a solution acceptable to all concerned could be found at a conference table. When asked if I had any specific solution in my mind, I told you clearly that I had none, except the one that emanated from the United Nations to which both India and Pakistan had agreed. Incidentally, I referred to a number of other possible solutions suggested, from time to time, by various people and friendly countries. It was in this sequence that confederation between India, Pakistan, and Kashmir was mentioned by me, as it was also being suggested as one of the possible solutions. Of course, this proposal was vehemently denounced by you. Such a solution, you felt, would encourage forces of disintegration not only in Pakistan, but more so in India. My advice to you, however, was not to reject any proposal outright, but to discuss its pros and cons in a friendly manner at the conference table and convince the other side that a particular solution would not lead to ultimate peace, which ought to be the common objective of all. My whole emphasis was that parties must give up their rigid attitudes and be prepared to listen to the viewpoint of the other side without attributing motives.

Both India and Pakistan, unfortunately got too involved in this dispute, and, therefore, such a solution must only emerge from the conference table, which the parties could present to their respective people as the only practical, honorable, and just solution under the prevailing circumstances. None should leave the conference table with a sense of defeat.

You were kind enough to agree to come to Delhi and meet late Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru but, to our misfortune, his sad and untimely death robbed us of this opportunity.

I hope you are doing well.

With kind regards,

Yours sincerely,  
(Sd. Sheikh Mohammad Abdullah)

2.5 LETTER TO KHWAJA GHULAM AHMED KASHMIRI,  
WHO HAD SENT SHEIKH MOHAMMAD ABDULLAH  
A CONGRATULATORY LETTER ON HIS SIXTY-SECOND BIRTHDAY  
WHILE HE WAS IN INCARCERATION

3 Kotla Lane  
New Delhi  
11 Dec 1967

Respected Sir,

May you have God's protection and blessings. Your congratulatory letter for my birthday with prayers for my long life has been received. Many thanks for the same.

To me, life is a journey which can be travelled in two ways. One can journey through it either as a slave to his wishes or as an obedient servant of God. In 1953, I had to decide which of the two ways I should adopt for myself. On one side, people were beckoning to me to live a life of comfort, luxury, affluence, and authority at the cost of my conscience. They were asking me to forget my ideals of self-determination and the right of the people of Kashmir to govern themselves and to barter away the rights of Kashmiris, which have been trampled on by rulers for hundreds of years. On the other side, the Holy Quran was warning me in God's own voice not to reject God's path and not to fall prey to the comforts of life.

Wise men had been telling me that the promises of men have no value; they can be broken at will. But, on the other hand, God's direction to be faithful and loyal was calling upon me to fulfill my promises to the people at all costs. There was a great deal of mental conflict for me in those days, but, finally, I decided that at no cost could I barter away the inherent right of Kashmiris for self-determination.

For centuries, Kashmiris have been deprived of their rights. Whoever the ruler from outside Kashmir, he treated Kashmiris harshly and drove them like cattle. In 1931, under my leadership, Kashmiris awakened, and with one mind and one voice adopted the slogan, 'It is the right of the Kashmiri people to form their own government.' They were willing to shed their blood throughout Kashmir for this ideal. Interpreting their wishes, I had stated in a court of law during my trial that I was leading a movement for self-rule in Kashmir.

For a very long time, Kashmir has attracted people by its natural beauty, by the art and industry of Kashmiri artisans. Nature has enriched the land

and attracted people from many nations. But if Kashmir has been such an object of attraction for people from outside, how much more is it for the Kashmiris who have been born in this beautiful setting!

In spite of the rich blessings of nature, the people of Kashmir are poor and hungry. Their faces are emaciated and they have no hopes for the future. Their eyes are dull and without light. Those who sympathize with them are pained to see their pitiful condition.

After concerted efforts for many years, in 1947, the whole world accepted as fair and just their demand for self-determination. It would have been mean on my part to have bartered away the freedom of the people of Kashmir for my personal gain or high office.

I had realized much earlier that the path to truth was full of thorns and privation, but, with my strong faith in God, I adopted that path. Does not the Quran say, 'He is the master of East and West. No other person except God is worthy of our worship. Make Him your guide and beacon light'?

I feel, even today, that my decision was right. It is difficult to express what mental satisfaction I had by that decision. From August 9, 1953, to this day when more than fourteen years have elapsed, countless maneuvers and attacks have been launched against me to gag the voice of truth and justice, but all their attempts have failed. The heart of every man in Kashmir, when it beats, seems to say, 'Kashmir is our land. We shall decide our own fate.' The difficulties in our way persist, but the destination is clear. The need of the hour is that we should continue our efforts unabated and should put our foot forward with firm conviction. God willing, success will be ours.

May God give us faith and will to act.

Yours sincerely,  
Sheikh Mohammad Abdullah

## Speeches

### 3.1 THE SPEECH THAT SHEIKH MOHAMMAD ABDULLAH WAS SCHEDULED TO MAKE IN SRINAGAR ON *EID* IN AUGUST 1953, BUT WAS UNABLE TO MAKE IT BECAUSE HIS GOVERNMENT WAS ARBITRARILY OUSTED AND HE WAS INCARCERATED

This uncertainty and suspense not only tells on the minds and nerves of the people, but also affects activities of the government in all directions. Almost all measures for raising the economic standards of the people carry a stamp of unreality in face of the over-riding uncertainty. Efficiency in administration suffers as the civil servants get mixed in opposite groups of power and vested interest. It becomes difficult to plan and delay occurs in the implementation of various nation-building schemes, which must wait for an overall solution. The prevalent uncertainty encourages corruption, and the unscrupulous make hay while the drift lingers on. ... The accession of Kashmir to India, otherwise complete in all other respects, possesses one essential disqualification. It is an accession accepted provisionally being subject to subsequent ratification by the people and, therefore, lacking finality and, as such, a major contribution to the uncertainty itself. It is also true that Pakistan has come to occupy the position of a party directly and vitally concerned with this issue. It is important to bear this fact in mind when we propose, in our eagerness to end the uncertainty, to settle the issue of accession quickly. Added to it is the fact that the Kashmir problem continues to

be a favorite topic on the agenda of the Security Council to be discussed when and as necessary and a matter of international dispute. Then there is the suggestion that the accession should be finalized by a vote of the Constituent Assembly. The question is, are decisions of the Constituent Assembly binding on India, Pakistan, and the UN? The Government of India, as a principal party to the dispute, itself does not consider a decision of the Constituent Assembly on the accession issue binding on it. This is clear from the extracts quoted here from Shri B. N. Rau's statements in the Security Council as leader of the Indian delegation in March 1951: "I shall now turn to the matter which appears to have caused some concern to certain members of the Council, viz., the proposal to convene a Constituent Assembly of Kashmir. As I have already said, Kashmir is, at present, a unit of the Indian Federation and has to be governed accordingly. When we were drafting the Constitution of India, we had to consider the various units of the Indian Federation. It was decided that the framing of the constitutions would be entrusted to a Constituent Assembly for the unit concerned. ... Honorable members will please note that the machinery of the Constituent Assembly was not devised only for Kashmir, but for other similar units of the Indian Federation as well. Provision was made in the Indian Constitution for a Constituent Assembly for settling the details of the Indian Constitution. Will that Assembly decide the question of accession? My government's view is that while the Constituent Assembly may, if it so desires, express an opinion on this question, but it can take no decision in it. ... Even in a Federation, every state has the right to make its own constitution in its proper sphere and to set-up a special body for that purpose. India cannot, therefore, prevent Kashmir, which at present is a unit of the Indian Federation, from exercising a similar right, which, indeed, is expressly recognized in the Constitution of India. ... The Constituent Assembly cannot be physically prevented from expressing its opinion on this question, if it so chooses. But this opinion will not bind my government or prejudice the position of the Council" (29/ 3/ 51).

Another fact which needs mention is that nearly one-third of the State's area is unrepresented in the Constituent Assembly. I think I should refer to the Delhi Agreements. These Agreements were endorsed both by the Indian Parliament and the State's Constituent Assembly, and we are committed to them. No doubt these Agreements are an attempt to define clearly the position of the State in India in regard to certain matters. Assuming that our Constitution would provide appropriate provision with regard to these matters and that these matters are clearly stated therein,



the question is would we, thereby, succeed in finalizing accession, the basic relationship. If this basic relationship itself is subject to ratification and, therefore, provisional, the character of the Delhi Agreements, which flow from such relationship, must be temporary and interim and, hence, hardly contributing to a settlement of the state's future. So, the uncertainty continues, and the people grind and suffer.

...There is growing awareness among the people of the State that a satisfactory and lasting solution of the Kashmir problem is possible only if both India and Pakistan examine this problem from the interest of the good of the people of the State as a whole. The State of Jammu and Kashmir is so situated geographically that it depends for its economy on a free flow of trade to both countries. For ages, Kashmiri arts and crafts have found markets in India. At the same time, the rivers and roads of Kashmir stretch into Pakistan, while our only road to India remains blocked for nearly three months a year. Kashmir's railhead used to be Rawalpindi and the traders in the Valley would use Karachi as the sea-port for overseas trade. These circumstances lend overwhelming weight to the aspirations of the people of the State to secure the goodwill of both India and Pakistan for their betterment and prosperity. They aspire that somehow the dispute should be settled in a manner as to allow them opportunities for national development based on the Indo-Pak accord. The National Conference organization opposes pro-merger sentiments of those cultural and ethnological groups whose sympathies and loyalties run outside their own state and the only result of whose activities would be to destroy the basic structure of the State. I know of occasions when I have tried to satisfy the legitimate demands of Muslims or reassure their minds about the future, when my friends have condemned me as a communalist and a turncoat. ... It becomes necessary that I should satisfy them to the same extent that a non-Muslim is satisfied that his future hopes and aspirations are safe in India. Unfortunately, apart from the disastrous effects which the pro-merger agitation in Jammu produced in Kashmir amidst the present growing fears and dissatisfactions, the Muslim middle class in Kashmir has been greatly perturbed to see that while the present relationship of the State with India has opened new opportunities for their Hindu and Sikh brother to ameliorate their lot, the have been assigned the position of a frog in the well.

...What the Muslim intelligentsia in Kashmir is a definite and concrete stake in India. So the minds of the people of Kashmir have moved from fear to frustration and from frustration to near-disillusionment, which I

have tried to explain in my recent speeches. While the National Conference stands committed to the support it gave to the Instrument of Accession and the Delhi Agreements, the fact remains that the present situation of suspense has primarily to be resolved: (1) Will public opinion in India, more particularly overwhelming majorities of the people of Jammu and Ladakh, accept the present relationship based on the Instrument of Accession and Delhi Agreements as final and not to be altered in due course by coercion or otherwise; (2) Would such relationship not be subject to change because of international factors; (3) Would all sections of the state's people derive equal benefit from such a relationship, irrespective of caste or creed? Would it be possible under this relationship to overcome the difficulties presented by geography or nature which stand in the way of all-round economic prosperity of the State?

### 3.2 SPEECH AT IDGAH, JANUARY 2, 1968

*Sheikh Mohammad Abdullah was released on January 2, 1968, after a prolonged detention, on the Muslim festival of Eid. After the Eid prayers, which he offered at the Idgah, he addressed the large gathering:*

My friends! Id Mubarak! I greet you affectionately!

Even after fourteen years of jail life, my ideas have not changed. The basis of all tensions in the relations between India and Pakistan is the Kashmir problem. Both countries must learn to live as good neighbors. It is time they realized that steady progress depends on their friendly relations.

I have made some commitments to the people of Kashmir and I shall fulfill those commitments at the cost of my life. In settling the Kashmir dispute, I shall never bargain with the honor and dignity of either country.

I remember vividly what Mahatma Gandhi did for Hindu-Muslim unity. I shall continue my efforts in this direction. I appeal to the six crores of Indian Muslims to live an orderly and organized life and to promote communal harmony. No other interest is dearer to me than the safety and welfare of the minorities of India and Pakistan.

To Muslims, my advice is do not hesitate to speak and live by the truth. Have no fears, and do not be depressed by adversity. Have an eye on the future, and do not feel ashamed that the country has been carved in two

and Pakistan has been created. Pakistan was created only with the consent of the people's representatives.

India, Pakistan, and Kashmir should sit together to solve the Kashmir problem, because it can never be solved by resorting to war. If Pakistan ever thought it could destroy India by war, it has surely given up such ideas now. Similarly, if India thinks it can annihilate Pakistan, it is equally foolish. The results of war are so obvious and fresh in our minds.

I am addressing you as a free man after years of detention. Since all restrictions have been removed from me, I can appeal to my brothers to work hard for the prosperity of their own country. They should love India as their motherland, as they have been born and brought up here. Let us hope that there will never again be war between India and Pakistan for it will be disastrous for the minorities of both countries. (Abdullah and Gundevia, *Testament*, 18–19)

### 3.3 SPEECH TO A GROUP OF KASHMIRI TRADERS, JANUARY 12, 1968

We had taken a vow that we would obtain an honorable place for the people of Kashmir and failing that we would sacrifice our lives. Our fight is age-old nights, at all a new undertaking. It is not directed toward India but toward those forces that have deprived Kashmiris of their rights. We are demanding only those elementary rights which are accepted as justly ours by people all over the world.

God's beautiful blessings in Kashmir have become a scourge for us. If you look at the pages of history, you will find that every monarch and government has wanted to own and rule Kashmir. Aware of these facts, some young men of Kashmir decided to seek a place of honor for the people of Kashmir even at the cost of their own lives. In 1931, I led this movement, telling my colleagues that if they wanted to save the honor of the Kashmiri masses, they would have to go through a bloodbath. The basis of our agitation was our claim to our birthright—the self-determination that was denied to us in our past.

People of other countries admire the natural beauty of Kashmir and have used the people of Kashmir for their own pleasure. We have been told that we were purchased for money along with the land of Kashmir in the Treaty of Amritsar in 1846 when Kashmir was sold to Gulab Singh for Rs. 75 lakhs.

When we started our agitation, we declared that Kashmir is our motherland, and only the residents of Kashmir can decide the future of Kashmir. Our slogan, “Kashmir for Kashmiris! Self-determination is the right of Kashmiri masses!” caught the imagination of the Kashmiri public and became popular. The idea of self-determination later on spread to other Indian states as well, but it started in Kashmir. The principle of self-determination is the basis of the United Nations Charter which has now been accepted by most of the nations of the world. Kashmiris were denied this right, but I will be fair in my contention. This right was taken away by neither India nor Pakistan; we were denied this right long ago, and that is why we started our agitation for its restoration as far back as 1931.

At the time of Partition, we did not accept Pakistan’s contention that as Kashmir was a Muslim majority state, it should join Pakistan. We replied that we started our agitation in 1931 against the idea that we are a property to be ceded to any claimant. Kashmir is inhabited by respectable human beings, all of whom have equal rights. We do not discriminate between Hindus and Muslims: the life of a Hindu is as sacred to me as that of a Muslim, and any harm to a Hindu shall be prevented at the cost of our lives for Islam teaches us that it is our duty to defend and help our weak neighbor.

When Pakistan attacked us, we accede to India. One of the conditions of the accession was that it was a temporary accession, and after conditions in the State were stabilized, the people of Kashmir would be asked to decide their future. The representative of India, Mr. Iyengar, took the same position in United Nations conferences. Pakistan did not agree to this position in the beginning but accepted it later. India, meanwhile, declared that Kashmir had finally acceded to India, and the decision could not be rescinded.

The situation deteriorated to such an extent that people only talked of India and Pakistan, completely eliminating Kashmiris. I would like to tell India and Pakistan clearly that Kashmir is inhabited by people who know no sacrifice too great for their cause. There is only one way to eliminate them and that is to silence them forever! (Abdullah and Gundevia, *Testament*, 50–51).

### 3.4 SPEECH TO THE MUSLIMS OF DEOBAND, JANUARY 1968

We have to make an honest attempt to heal the wounds of the people. These wounds will not heal with further hatred but only with live and friendship. It is time we sorted out our problems and thought of some solution. Our sacred book clearly tells us that our salvation lies in following the path shown by our noble Prophet. Muslims should then model themselves on the teachings of Islam. If they do, they will be respected and their teachings will be respected. Non-Muslims do not read the Quran and are ignorant of the basic principles of our religion. They can judge Islam only by the conduct of Muslims, but, unfortunately, most Muslims do not pattern their conduct on the teachings of their religion with the result that today a number of evils are found in our behavior.

Very recently, in June 1967, Muslims lost control of the mosques in Jerusalem. Israel, with a limited area and a small army, was placed against a vast Arab world with unlimited manpower. You are aware of the results of this war. The vast Arab countries were helpless against Israel. Why? The Arab defeat was caused by the Muslim people's deviation from the path shown by the Prophet. We are too much in love with worldly pleasures and have interpreted even the teachings of the Quran according to our convenience.

If we want to put an end to our miseries, we should correct our conduct. Misfortunes do come, but men of courage must face them boldly. How long can Muslims afford to sit in inaction? How long can we depend on the uncertain promises of tomorrow? Until we present good conduct, we cannot give a message of unity and solidarity to the world.

What was the strength of the Prophet's companions? There were only 313 supporters in the Battle of Badr. They had very few arms, and, yet, they were able to change the course of history. But Muslims of the present day have neither the ambition, nor the courage, nor the practical wisdom of the Prophet and his companions. We must be united and stand like a wall of granite. We should remember two things: our duties toward God, and our duties toward humankind. We should treat our neighbors well, and we should be prepared to share their misfortunes.

Crores of Muslims have adopted India as their motherland, and they have a number of duties toward this country, among them to defend its honor. If they do not act according to the teachings of their religion, what opinion will the Hindus of India have about them? Muslims should fear

none except God. They should side with the truth, whether it goes against their interest or the interest of their own dear ones.

We, in Kashmir, are continuing our fight against injustice, but we are not unmindful of the difficulties of Indian Muslims. We shall not take any step which may harm their interests, but we shall not submit to any black-mail. It is the right of Indian Muslims to live in their mother country, but that right does not depend on the accession of Kashmir to India. The Muslims of India should be able to say that if Kashmiris accede to India, they are welcome, and if they do not, it is their choice.

Islam has a human outlook. It does not differentiate between man and man. God, according to the teachings of Islam, is the master of the world, not the master of Muslims alone. Islam teaches equality. A true Muslim does not harm his neighbor. The Muslims of today should cultivate strength of character with which they, like other great Muslims of India, can fight their battles without armies and bloodshed (Abdullah and Gundevia, *Testament*, 60–61).

### 3.5 SPEECH IN PATNA, BIHAR, JANUARY 23, 1968

The later Pandit Nehru, during his last days, felt strongly that friendship between India and Pakistan was essential. After China attacked India, he realized that if India and Pakistan continued to live in opposite camps, the freedom of both would be endangered. Accordingly, he permitted me to visit Pakistan and asked me to use my influence to encourage amity between the two countries. But luck and time did not favor us for Pandit Nehru died soon after.

But to the young people, let me say this: it is time for you to forge ahead and undo the mistakes committed by your predecessors. Hostile relations between India and Pakistan do the greatest harm to the interests of the young. Today, after twenty years of freedom, when we see thousands of people hungry and miserable, tears flow down our cheeks. Was it for this that we achieved freedom? When I was in detention, I used to weep for the masses of Bihar. After I was released, I saw a documentary film on the drought conditions in Bihar, and, again, I cried for the poor people of that State. I ask you, what did the people of Bihar get by attaining freedom? Who is responsible for their famine? The Ganges passes through Bihar, but if the farmers do not have water for irrigation, how can they raise crops? People holding the reins of administration are

responsible for this disaster. It is time the resources of this country were utilized properly!

The progress and affluence of Kashmiris is linked with India; the development of India depends upon the economic progress of Pakistan; and the affluence of Pakistan depends upon the economic progress of India. I have always said that Mr. Jinnah and the other Muslim leaders were not the ones responsible for the creation of Pakistan, although the conditions prevailing at the time provoked the ten crores of Muslims to demand partition of the country. It is natural for people to think in those terms when they are faced with difficult circumstances. This way of thinking was wrong, but, at the same time, it was to be expected, and whether it was good or bad, India and Pakistan became a reality (Abdullah and Gundevia, *Testament*, 54–55).

### 3.6 SPEECH IN DEOBAND, JANUARY 28, 1968

Thousands of people have laid down their lives for the freedom of the country, and they have cried themselves hoarse shouting “Independence for India!” But the dreams of freedom that we saw before Independence do not seem to be coming true. It is a tragedy of circumstances that the two brothers fought the battle for freedom together but fell out while attaining it, and the country was partitioned.

The fate of Kashmir was left undecided. Pakistan claimed the State, but we, Kashmiris, told Pakistan that the future of Kashmir would be decided by the people of Kashmir themselves. This problem developed into a malignant boil, and in 1965, the two brothers were again embroiled in war. Crores of rupees were wasted, but we still stand where we have always stood.

Look at the unenviable position of Kashmir: toward the west stands Pakistan and toward the east, India. The only way to save Kashmir, India, and Pakistan is to create a strong bond of friendship and mutual love—but there are people who do not allow a favorable atmosphere to develop. The masters of our destiny are more concerned about keeping their jobs and positions and spare little time to see that the masses have bread to eat.

I appeal to the people who instigate our young men for their own purposes to think deliberately about the after-effects of this bitterness on the progress of the country. You should direct your energies to our problems and search for a solution rather than wasting your time on disputes and demonstrations (Abdullah and Gundevia, *Testament*, 77).

### 3.7 SPEECH AT MUJAHID MANZIL, MARCH 4, 1968

#### *Response of People's Affection*

The love and affection which the people of Kashmir have showered upon me in such abundant measure does indeed sustain and fortify me. But it is important to remember that no nation can progress unless the people are organized and disciplined. If fervor is not accompanied by reason, then things may be miscarried.

I am a witness to the many discomforts you have had to put up with when you turned out in such large numbers to welcome me on my return. But with better discipline and organization, many of those discomforts would be avoidable. I, therefore, urge you to cultivate discipline and be fully organized.

#### *Mere Numbers do Not Count*

You must have seen recently that mere number in a class or community cannot always prevail against better organization or discipline. The question posed by the Arab-Israeli conflict should provide an object lesson to us all of how a tiny country like Israel, because of its being better disciplined and organized, triumphed over superior numbers. I told you today at Amirakadal that many of our young men who were present there were raising the cry, "Our demand Plebiscite!". I can assure you that I and my colleagues will not hesitate to lay down our lives for the achievement of our objective. If we had wanted to compromise on our stand in this regard, it was unnecessary for us to have remained in jail for fourteen long years.

#### *Right of Self-Determination*

Your right, which you demand, is so valuable and precious that no amount of sacrifices would be too great for the realization thereof. There is, therefore, no question of our bartering away this right. We have to meet any challenge in this respect with full strength and determination. Our cause is just, and God's words "truth will triumph over falsehood" will surely triumph.



### *Background of Plebiscite Demand*

I want our young men who raised the slogan “We want Plebiscite!” to realize what the background to this demand is. Kashmir has had a chequered history. It was in turn overrun by Moghuls, Pathans, Sikhs, and later by Dogras. They were all bewitched by the beauty of this place, but, drunk with power and intransigence, they treated its inhabitants as mere chattel, destined only to provide creature comforts to them. This is what historians of all denominations have recorded. In our time, one Sir Albion Banerjee was a minister who resigned his office and issued a statement depicting the condition of the people, stating that they were treated as “dumb driven cattle,” and even elementary human rights were denied to them. The basis of the taunt hurled at us was mainly that we had been sold for a pittance of 75 lakh rupees to Maharajah Gulab Singh by the British, and, therefore, our elders reconciled themselves to being treated as mere chattel.

When some of us grumbled against it, they attributed their lot to fate.

So, in 1931, some of us decided that we would strive to change this fate, cost what it may. Pursuant thereto, we met in the compound of Khanqah-i-Mualla where we took an oath that we would embark upon this task. We have since 1931 been working ceaselessly in this direction in order to vindicate our stand that this country belongs to us, and we have the sole right to decide its destiny.

This brought us into conflict with Maharajah Hari Singh, who threw us into prison and made us the butt end of bullets, but that did not deter us from the course set by us.

Some of our colleagues grew weary in the struggle, and they changed their course, but our caravan went on, and many new young men joined us; we went on and on until India was divided into two parts. We were then to decide with whom we should link our destiny—India or Pakistan. But the State of those two countries at the time was such that a great holocaust prevailed in them both, preventing us from taking a decision calmly and dispassionately as to with whom we should finally cast in our lot. We, therefore, made it plain to either of these two countries that situated as we then were and having regard to the conditions that then obtained in those two countries, it was important for us to take a decision on the question whether we should accede to one or the other or take any other course—and that a decision in this regard had to wait until more propitious times, as that decision of ours was going to affect our future generations.

Unfortunately, our proposal in this behalf did not meet with approval, and when I deputed my emissaries to Pakistan, they refused to concede that the right to decide this question belonged to the people. They replied that erstwhile India had been divided on a communal basis, and, therefore, as the State of Kashmir enjoyed a predominance of Muslims, it should go to Pakistan. But I replied that non-Muslims numbering ten lakhs also lived on their own along with the majority community, and we had, therefore, determined that we should decide our own future and would not submit to any decision that was sought to be imposed on us. This led to a difference of opinion between us, but India concede our right that the people of Kashmir should decide their own future.

### *Nehru—The Spokesman of Self-Determination*

Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru, particularly, advocated our cause and proclaimed to the world that it was for the people of Kashmir to decide their future, and no decision by any authority or power could be imposed on them.

Well, India then took the matter before the Security Council. It proclaimed before the world that they had no desire to annex any part of the State, and if they had sent their forces there, it was for the sole purpose of protecting Kashmir and safeguarding her right to self-determination, which, he stated, they were free to exercise. When he visited foreign countries, he repeated this pledge made to the people of Kashmir, and when he visited the State, he reaffirmed that pledge and stated in unequivocal terms that whatever the decision of the people of the State in regard to their future disposition, it would be accepted without demur by India; with the result that both in the Security Council and in the world at large, both India and Pakistan and all the other countries of the world conceded this right of the people of Kashmir to decide their own future freely and without any duress or coercion, and that, as a matter of fact, a plebiscite would be held to ascertain the wishes of the people under United Nations auspices.

### *India Reneges*

Sometime later, India—all of a sudden went back on its pledges and declared that they were no longer bound to hold a plebiscite and sought to justify this by saying that India had ascertained the people's wishes in a

different way—that they had held three elections where the people of the State had had an opportunity to express their views on this issue.

India tried hard to convince the world that the people of Kashmir had expressed their views on this question, but that was utterly baseless. This led to a clash between us and India, because we could not yield on this matter, having taken the pledge in 1931 and having resisted Pakistan in 1947 when it sought to deny this right to us.

### *Right Can Never Be Bartered Away*

There is, therefore, no power on earth which can compel us to sell our rights. It is a matter of life and death to us. It is not a matter of our being spiteful toward India or Pakistan; the question of spite does not arise in this matter. All that we want is vindication of the right for whose restitution we have been striving for the past several centuries.

This right belongs to all the people inhabiting this country, and it is only when we are able to have this right restored to us that we can find a place of honor in the world. Well, any country that seeks to snatch this right from us cannot be regarded as our friend, irrespective of who does it, any country of the world that likewise opposes this just demand of ours cannot, likewise, be regarded as a true friend of the people of Kashmir.

### *Centuries of Struggle Behind Our Right*

All this provides a background to our demand for plebiscite. This demand is backed by centuries of struggle, which is enshrined in history. Therefore, as long as there is life in us, we will not compromise on this issue.

The holding of a plebiscite is one method to ascertain the will of the people, but it is certainly not the sole method. If this, however, presents any insuperable difficulties, then we can explore other methods, the sole purpose being that whatever the decision arrived at, the people of Kashmir must be in a position to own it as their own and not regard it as an imposed solution.

They must, therefore, realize that whatever they may do, they will never succeed in playing with this right of the Kashmiri people but will have to concede it to them, no matter whether it takes 20 years or 100 years, for even if Sheikh Abdullah goes under fighting, lakhs of Sheikh Abdullah's will then emerge from his ashes, who will then strive to vindicate that right.

*Kashmir Not a Territorial Dispute, But a Problem  
of 5 Million Humans*

Those friends who come from outside must have witnessed how our young men and women feel on this issue. If some foreign powers regard this merely as a territorial dispute between India and Pakistan and consider that their demands can be met by parceling out this country to them, then the matter cannot rest there, for this leaves out of account the 50 lakhs of people inhabiting this country, with all of their urges and aspirations for the fulfillment of which they have labored for so long.

If this human aspect is appreciated, then the futility of settling this dispute between India and Pakistan by partitioning the State will become manifest—for it is not a question of what would satisfy India or Pakistan, but what are the just rights and privileges of the people who inhabit this country—and that no decision can be imposed on them to which they cannot give their willing consent.

The question, therefore, does not revolve around the distribution of territory between the two contending powers, but one which centers around the question of what are the inalienable rights of the people of the State.

Therefore, any country which supports this just demand of the people of Kashmir is a friend—not so any country which would deny that right to them.

I know we are an unarmed people, but arms are no substitute for determination and resolution—and if you are armed with them, then your rights cannot be interfered with.

You have, therefore, to be prepared to pay an extreme penalty for the vindication of this right.

Kashmir is part of the larger subcontinent though a tiny part—therefore, it is an equal sharer with India and Pakistan in all their joys and sorrows, because we all constitute one organic entity, although the two main constituents thereof have decided to separate. But, they must all unite to defend this whole, and if they do not unite and defend their common interests, then both may stand to lose.

So far as we, the people of Kashmir, are concerned, we find ourselves between two stools. So long as India and Pakistan fight between themselves, we surely are bound to suffer, as our country may prove to be the battleground of the two nation-states. That was what happened in 1965. It is, therefore, of paramount importance to us that India and Pakistan

should come together, and that they cannot advance in the world until they sink their differences and come together.

But there are some people and some groups to whom it is of no consequence whether India or Pakistan live or go under, so long as they are able to make capital out of their differences and are able to retain their own fishes and loaves of office and other positions of vantage, which surely they stand to lose if the two countries come together. (*Speeches and Interviews*, 15–22)

### 3.8 SPEECH IN SHAHI MASJID GROUNDS, MARCH 5, 1968

You must have noticed the slogans that were raised by thousands of our young men with such enthusiasm and vivacity, right from the airport to Mujahid Manzil. Some of them were to the effect that our demand is for a free and fair plebiscite. Secondly, that this country belongs to us, and we shall decide its future. I wish to assure these young men, particularly, and the people of Kashmir, generally, that we shall not permit these rights of the people of the State to be bartered away, for we have been struggling hard since 1931 to secure these rights. It is our firm belief that we shall succeed in wresting them back to us.

What means should be adopted for the restitution of our rights? The first and foremost thing to bear in mind is that our exuberance should be tempered by reason. We should ensure that we are pursuing the correct means for the attainment of our objective. It now rests with the young men of Kashmir to carry on from now onwards, for we, the older generation, have so far suffered all sorts of privations but have never compromised on Kashmir's fundamental right of self-determination and have unhesitatingly opposed any class or country which has sought to repudiate this right of the Kashmiri; we have stood firm as a rock in meeting any such challenge.

#### *People are the Sole Arbiters*

Therefore, there should be no room for doubt that we would not yield an inch in regard to this right of self-determination of the people of Kashmir. It is our firm belief that it is the people of this country who are the masters of their destiny and are entitled to a place of honor, coupled with freedom, in the world.

### *Need for Dogged Faith and Resolute Action*

As I look at our young men and women, a prayer goes forth from the bottom of my heart that they may rise to the great heights for which we have been yearning and to which we dedicated our lives. It is necessary to work ceaselessly for achievement of the right of self-determination, and we should never allow our steps to be retarded, but should proceed along that road, coming nearer and nearer to our cherished goal. Dogged faith and resolute action are called for in regard to the achievement of our objective. The subcontinent, comprised of India and Pakistan, is a vat area, and it remained in foreign occupation for 200 years. The people of undivided India had to put up with untold suffering to achieve emancipation. The people of the State, in keeping with their high tradition, also joined their brethren in that struggle, as their own urges and aspirations were linked with theirs.

### *Partition a Reality*

Unfortunately, however, following independence, India was divided into two parts—Bharat and Pakistan—as the Muslim minority in India feared that the Hindus in India would not mete out justice to them. The partition of the subcontinent caused deep anguish to many people, but there was no alternative to our reconciling ourselves to that partition, and it only remains for us to bend all our energy to the task of seeing that this partition does not affect people's minds and hearts.

### *Indo-Pak Common Problems*

We are fully aware of the fact that the entire subcontinent has common problems, and the people are bound to each other by numerous ties, but partition has even resulted in the separation of families. There is, therefore, no doubt that the progress and future development of both these countries rests largely on the fact that they must proceed shoulder to shoulder with each other and cooperate in all joint ventures avoiding all wasteful expenditure incurred by them on their mutual confrontation, as that would spell their own doom, and pave the way for their domination by third parties.

### *Lesson of West Germany*

Although West Germany suffered utter annihilation during the last war, they had, during the short span of a few years, been able to rehabilitate themselves and rise swiftly again to a position of viability.

If this is what West Germany could achieve, there is no reason why India and Pakistan cannot do the same. I am convinced that the people of the subcontinent fervently desire to come nearer to each other and live in peace and friendship with one another.

### *Indian People Desire Peace with Pakistan*

I have no doubt in my mind that any discordant views expressed in Parliament do not correctly reflect the voice of the people; similar views expressed in newspapers also do not always represent the truth. So far as I know, the people of India desire that they should live in friendship and harmony with the people of Pakistan, and any views to the contrary expressed in some newspapers are, in my opinion, based on expediency.

I am happy to find that some newspapers do express correct feelings in this regard.

### *Kashmir's Welfare Dependent on Indo-Pak Amity*

So far as the people of Kashmir are concerned, their future happiness and welfare are linked with the people of India and Pakistan, but, unfortunately, those two countries are a loggerheads with each other, and we have become a pawn in their hands. So long as the two governments are not able to resolve their disputes, our own safety is in jeopardy. It is, therefore, in our vital interest that these two countries should be on the best of terms with each other. We are firmly of the opinion that friendship between India and Pakistan is very essential for the happiness, prosperity, and well-being of their peoples. While, therefore, struggling for our right of self-determination, it becomes essential for Kashmir that we should strive hard to secure friendship between India and Pakistan. The main hurdle in the achievement of friendship between the two is the Kashmir dispute, and until it is settled, friendship between them would not appear to be attainable. Government leaders in India often lend themselves to making extraordinary statements on Kashmir from time to time, declaring that Kashmir is an integral part of India and reiterating this parrot like.

### *Futility of Slogan Mongering*

For years, Bakshi Ghulam Mohammad has been harping on the irrevocability of Kashmir's accession to India, but the world knows the dispute continues unabated, therefore, it is clear that mere slogan mongering will not enable India to claim Kashmir as an integral part, as such a claim can only be sustained when the people of the State concede it.

It, therefore, behooves all concerned to accept this hard reality. This is the task before us, The road is hard and stony, but if we bring to bear on our task resolute determination and perseverance, we shall not only be able to achieve success in securing our own right, but we shall be able to reunite lacerated hearts and minds of the people of the entire subcontinent.

I recall what Gandhi Ji had said when communal frenzy was raging in undivided India on the eve of Partition. At the time, Gandhi Ji had found a ray of hope in the efforts made in the State of Jammu and Kashmir in keeping aloft the torch of communal harmony and concord. We wish to assure Gandhi Ji's soul that we shall spare no pains in translating his dream for the fulfillment of which he had laid down his life, as we are convinced that the key to the solution of all the problems that confronted India and Pakistan was Indo-Pak friendship. So long as they follow opposite courses and adopt conflicting policies, and do not settle their disputes peacefully—particularly with regard to the future dispensation of the State of Jammu and Kashmir—then not just in the economic field, but in all other fields too, they will fail to rise to great heights and will instead have to be suppliants for aid from other countries.

### *Hope to Unite the Two Parts of Kashmir*

Maulvi Noor-ud-Din, President of Anjuman-i-Ahli-Hadis, deplored the fact that while it had been made possible to land on the moon, they had not been able to secure a reunion between their separated kith and kin across the ceasefire line for the last 20 years. I share this regret with him and express the sincere hope that before long we would be able to reunite with our brethren from whom we have been separated for so long. With God's help, we shall be able to pull down this artificial barrier. (*Speeches and Interviews*, 23–28)



### 3.9 A GATHERING ADDRESSED BY SHEIKH MOHAMMAD ABDULLAH, SOPORE, MARCH 8, 1968

I pray for the freedom and prosperity of my people, and I thank them all from the bottom of my heart for the very warm welcome which has been given to me. May God grant them fulfillment of their hopes and aspirations, and may He grant me the strength to serve them to the best of my ability.

#### *New Awakening*

Ever since I set foot on this land, I have been privileged to see the fervor and determination with which the people of land are filled, and that, surely, is a guarantee of the fact that nothing can stand between them and the realization of their great objective for which they have been working ceaselessly since 1931.

Our young men who say "We Want Plebiscite" must know what history is embedded in that demand.

#### *Kashmir's Past*

It was several hundred years ago that the people of Kashmir lost their own freedom. Our alien rulers regarded us as objects of their pleasure and treated us as mere chattel until at long last the dead soul of Kashmir rose again, and the young men of Kashmir stood up for their rights. The people of Sopore played a leading part in that struggle.

It would be invidious to mention names of some of our stalwarts of Sopore, but many such living ones as Sofi Mohammad Akbar who, in spite of his indifferent health, has held aloft the banner of freedom.

#### *Break from the Past*

Our young people of today have now come to have full appreciation of the fact that they must now take their rightful place in the struggle for the freedom of their land and be prepared to offer any sacrifice demanded of them.

If, then, this is the motive force which swings our young men and women, then our success is assured. We bear no ill-will or animus toward any class or country, but we do feel that the right of self-determination is our birthright which cannot be withheld from us, but as our goal approaches fast, our way becomes more difficult to tread. Nevertheless, you will not relent in your efforts until the goal is reached. What you need most in your armory is that you must possess in full measure firm faith and resolute action. You must be imbued with faith and have the will and the capacity to change our present lot for a better future when we shall come into our own. For when a person is moved by faith, then he/she gets the wings of Gabriel to reach his/her destination.

Kashmir is a real paradise for those who to take a holiday here, but for its inhabitants, it has been for centuries a veritable hell where they could not get enough to keep their body and soul together, and where they were famished for want of food, raiment, and the like.

I used, therefore, to put this question to myself: what sort of unkind fate was this that brought about this contrast between those who were the natives of this place and those who visited it for their “pleasure”?

### *Be a Moumin (Believer)*

That explains the genesis of the movement we started in 1931, which was aimed at wresting our birthright, that we were the architects of our own fate, which could not be determined by either India or Pakistan. For this purpose we had to be true *moumins* (believers). A person has the power to determine his/her destiny, but the prerequisite was that he/she should be a *moumin* (believer)—that is to say that he/she should fear God, and none else.

The true hallmark of a *moumin* is that he/she guards against evil and is guided solely by the precept and example of the Prophet (Peace Be Upon Him). Once this is assured, God’s favor will abound.

You must, therefore, search your hearts and decide whether you are following these tenets, and whether you possess the requisite attributes. If we are afraid of speaking the truth for fear of the consequences to us and for that reason, do not advocate or support the truth, then that detracts from our faith in God, who alone is our savior.

So, if we can turn to Him in all humility and adoration realizing full well that it is in His power alone to help or harm us, then we have nothing to fear from anyone else.

The battle of Badar is an instance of what I'm talking about. A handful of companions of the Prophet secured victory over an adversary who, by far, outnumbered them.

I, therefore, call upon you that you make the Quran your guide and follow the path indicated to us by the Prophet and mold our lives accordingly. (*Speeches and Interviews*, 36–39)

3.10 SPEECH MADE BY SHEIKH MOHAMMAD ABDULLAH  
ON THE OCCASION OF *EID* (A RELIGIOUS HOLIDAY  
CELEBRATED BY MUSLIMS WORLDWIDE)  
ON MARCH 10, 1968

I offer all of you *Eid* greetings from the depth of my heart. I hope that this *Eid* will be a harbinger of joy and success to you all.

On this occasion, I think particularly of those languishing in jails, especially our young men who are detained and are facing privations and suffering in various interrogation centers.

*Freedom Struggle*

On this occasion, I cannot afford to make a long speech as the time at my disposal is short, but I cannot help referring to the past history of our struggle for emancipation, which dates back to the year of grace 1931, when we had made up our minds to free ourselves from the shackles of bondage, and in that process have suffered untold misery. Many of our colleagues have perished in the course of that struggle, and many of our young men and women have had to face great trials and tribulations, but the cardinal point is that any country/people that is bent on changing its fate for a better future can do so, given the necessary will and determination.

Since my return to this place, I have been privileged to witness a new urge and a new determination among all the people, young and old alike. I have, therefore, come to the conclusion that because of this, our bad days will soon yield to a better future.

### *People's Will the Determining Factor*

We will not hesitate to pay the supreme penalty for the achievement of our objective. The next thing that I wish to emphasize is that I fervently desire that the Government of India and the leaders there realize that they cannot own this country by mere assertions to that effect, but it can be a real part of India only when its inhabitants say so and feel so. Kashmir cannot become an integral part of India merely if some party or some people are entrenched in office.

People here do not possess weapons but are, certainly, armed with determination to change their fate. For that purpose, it does not matter if people are poor and subjected to all kinds of privations, because once a nation or a people make up their minds as regards the need for having a better life, then they are bound to have it.

### *India, Pak, and Kashmir are Interdependent*

I wish to stress that our honor is bound up with the honor of India and Pakistan, and if India and Pakistan live with honor, then their honor is assured, but if, god forbid, they are in distress, then we would suffer in consequence. Because if one part of the body is afflicted, then the other parts are bound to be affected. It is for this reason that we are striving and will continue to strive that those two countries, India and Pakistan, should come together, and that, while maintaining a separate entity, they may live in good neighborliness, and may end their bickering and disputes, as this is the sure road to progress. For so long as those two countries are in conflict with each other, we are bound to suffer. In their friendship lies our salvation, and if they continue in disharmony with each other, then we are bound to lose.

### *Auqaf Hospital*

I also wish to mention that my colleague, Khwaja Ali Shah, and other office bearers of the Auqaf Islamia have drawn my attention to the fact that we stand in dire need of a private hospital, and the events of the recent past have forced us to realize the urgency, because when there were casualties among Muslims, they did not receive the required promptitude in government-owned hospitals. Therefore, it has become imperative that we have an institution where they would receive prompt attention.

We may need a crore of rupees for that purpose. Whatever donations you can raise for that purpose, I shall seek to augment with an equal amount. There is no dearth of philanthropists, and I will draw on them for that purpose. But self-help is most important. In that connection, I have sent out a communiqué to some of my most valued friends. (*Speeches and Interviews*, 40–42)

### 3.11 SPEECH IN PULWAMA, KASHMIR MARCH 14, 1968

I am here after a lapse of 18 years. I think of the great martyrs who used to stand with me on this ground, those who laid down their lives and shed their blood. The question is what was it that made them shed their blood?

The role that the people of Pulwama, men, women, and children, have played constitutes a glorious chapter in our annals. The people of both Rajpor and Shopian have done the same. We, therefore, have to see that the blood which our martyrs have shed will not go in vain but will yield its due result, as otherwise we will be accountable to them on the day of Resurrection.

Our objective is that we, the people of Kashmir, should be able to order our lives as we desire—that we hold the reins of this country in our own hands. That is the meaning of the slogan that you raised—that this country belongs to us, and that we shall decide its fate.

Since the time is short, and we have to say our mid-day prayers, I must conclude my address to you, and hope that you support the motion to be placed before you by Mirza Afzal Beg. That motion is to the effect that this huge gathering assembled here condemn in most unequivocal terms the dastardly acts committed by the Rhodesian regime in hanging some of great fighters for their country's freedom. And we assure the people of Rhodesia that our hearts go out to them in sympathy. We also assure them of our full support in their just struggle. (*Speeches and Interviews*, 43–44)

### 3.12 SPEECH AT HAZRATBAL, SRINAGAR, MARCH 15, 1968

37 years ago, we launched a movement which was literally initiated in the holy precincts of Khanqah-e-Mualla. That movement had its ups and downs, but it reached a stage when the world, at large, became conversant with its purposes. That did not hold good 37 years ago when hardly

anyone outside the State knew anything about Kashmir, except that it was a beautiful place.

The first hurdle we had to cross was when we had to make our cause known throughout the world, which in effect was that we, the inhabitants of this place, should be able to order our affairs in our own country without hindrance from others. This is what is meant by the right of self-determination, which the erstwhile rulers of Kashmir, whether they were Sikhs, Hindus, or Muslims throughout its long history had snatched from the people.

So in 1931, a few young men decided that they must stand up for their right and must seek to change their wretched lot by actively working for it, unlike their elders who had for so long cherished the delusion that they were destined to endure a life of servitude and be merely carriers of wood and drawers of water. The young men who had appeared on the scene decided to seek confrontation with the powers-that-be in order to change their lot for the better. This was also in accordance with the Quranic tenet, which ordains that God almighty does not alter a people's condition for the better unless those people bestir themselves and take active steps in that direction.

It is for this reason that some of us have spent the best part of our lives in jails for periods ranging up to 14 years.

The people, in general, then realized the significance of our struggle and increasingly took part in our movement. The subcontinent was partitioned, and we, the people of Kashmir, had to decide whether we should accede to the one or the other of the two countries into which the subcontinent was divided, or remain independent.

Some people here complain that it was I who stood in the way of their acceding to Pakistan at the time, and it is, therefore, I who has involved them in a great deal of misery and trouble. But the reason for my doing so should be fully appreciated.

When the entire subcontinent was divided into two separate states, India and Pakistan, I pleaded that it was for the people of the State of Jammu and Kashmir to decide whether to accede to one or the other or remain independent, and that this decision could not be taken on their behalf by anyone else. At the time of partition, disturbances, on a large scale, prevailed in those two countries, and multitudes of people were uprooted from their homes, and a great holocaust ensued.

At such a dark hour in history, it was impossible to decide coolly and calmly as to what course of action we should adopt. We, therefore, asked

both those countries to grant us some respite, so that when conditions returned to normal, we could take a decision in this matter.

The leaders of Pakistan at the time did not concede to us this right to decide our own destiny, but claimed the State on the grounds that the division of India had been effected on communal basis. We could clearly not accede to that demand of Pakistan.

While the parlays were still going on, the State was raided and disturbances took place. The Maharaja's army carried out a massacre of people in Poonch. So faced with this twin thread to our existence, it became impossible to take a decision coolly and dispassionately at the time.

The Government of India accepted our viewpoint and agreed that it was for the people of Jammu and Kashmir to decide their future, which they could do freely and without duress. Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru, the acknowledged leader of India, became our champion—he put it before the world that the people of Kashmir alone could decide the matter. And it was before the United Nations that India proclaimed that if the people of Kashmir opted for India, it would be a matter of satisfaction to them. If, on the contrary, they acceded to Pakistan, India would have no objection to that course. Likewise, if Kashmir decided to remain independent, even then they would have no objection.

It was on that basis alone that our relationship with India was founded. When the matter came before the Security Council, both India and Pakistan as well as the rest of the world agreed to this right of Kashmiris to decide their own future freely and without any coercion.

Therefore, there is no substance in the assertion that I sold my countrymen, as other colleagues of mine did for their own ulterior ends.

I too held the office of Prime Minister in the State. I could have bargained for my continuance in that office, but I did not do so. I constantly had the oath that I had taken in my mind, which was that I would never sell or barter any rights, and that it was for you and you alone to decide your future. That was the pledge which India, Pakistan, and the rest of the countries of the world also reaffirmed—the people of Kashmir would decide their future freely and without duress.

After a while India's intentions changed, and they wanted to see who among us would fall in with them. But I made it plain to Pandit Nehru that I could not be a party to giving up the right of my people, for the fulfillment of which I had labored since 1931, and I could not be guilty of bad faith to them.

I knew full well that in taking that stand I would be faced with stupendous difficulties, but I did not waver or falter. When the National Conference ceased to be owned by us, Mirza Afzal Beg founded the Plebiscite Front, and we had to pay the price by being committed to jail.

The efforts of the Plebiscite Front were directed solely to securing the right of the people of Jammu and Kashmir, which right had been conceded by the world, but India was now opposing that right. Therefore, it put in the saddle persons who would toe their line and asphyxiate the people and mold them according to their wishes by sheer graft and intimidation. Through such men a constitution was adopted for the State, and then it was proclaimed by people like G. M. Sadiq, Bakshi Ghulam Mohammad, and Mir Qasim that this was the people's decision and that they had ratified Kashmir's accession to India.

We, of course, were thrown into jails, and our voice was ought to be stifled. But a voice that is backed up by the voice of God can never be stilled or silenced.

Those among us who succumbed to temptation and had been entrenched in office proclaimed that Kashmir was an integral part of India, as they thought that, thereby, the problem would be solved. But I made it clear to them all that Kashmir would not become an integral part of India, even if such slogans continued to be raised.

It is true that we had to pay a price and undergo suffering and hardship, but the Prophet (Peace Be Upon Him) also faced great hardships and privations. But a right does not get extinguished merely because one has to face tribulations in seeking to assert it. This is borne out by the fact that although India is a vast country and has immense resources, yet it has not been able to still our voice. We have no resources, but India with all its resources is not able to convince the world that their case is right, and, therefore, they are holding the country by force. They have gone back on their pledged word. We say that this is not the right thing to do. It is not necessary for us to make much ado about this. Our case is clear and strong. That is known the world over.

So, the present position is that there is no country in the world which supports the Indian stand.

We are not opposed as such to either India or Pakistan. As a matter of fact, we are opposed to no country in the world. We only say that Kashmir is our country, and that we have the right to decide its future as to whether we should accede to India, or Pakistan, or remain independent. Neither



India, or Pakistan, or any other country in the world can prevent us from deciding this matter as we deem fit.

It is true that even when one country occupies another, it does not easily leave the colonized country until conditions are created that compel the occupying power to leave, and for that purpose, your determination and resolution are required.

You must, therefore, be disciplined. Numbers do not count. It is discipline and organization that matter. The Plebiscite Front, founded by Mirza Afzal Beg, is the organization under whose banner all of you must rally. Many persons have come our way since 1931, but I can say with confidence that Mirza Afzal Beg is a leader who will never barter away your rights. He is a tested and tried soldier who will not yield to any pressure or temptation. He has withstood many a test in the course of the long struggle over which I presided but has never subordinated Kashmir's interest to his own. When I called upon him to quit the office of minister, he did so and never demurred in doing what he was required by me to do. We have, therefore, no person more qualified than he in whom you can confide. It is, therefore, necessary for you to strengthen his hands and organization.

India tried hard to destroy this organization, and even Pandit Nehru, in a fit of anger, once said that he would destroy this organization, but what God protects and preserves, none can destroy.

Our enemies want to drive a wedge between us, but we must remain united and present a united front. We bear no ill will or malice to anyone. All that we want is that we must have the right and opportunity to decide our own destiny.

May God make our task easy! (*Speeches and Interviews*, 45–50)

3.13 INAUGURAL ADDRESS OF SHEIKH MOHAMMAD  
ABDULLAH DELIVERED AT THE CONVENTION OF DELEGATES,  
JAMMU AND KASHMIR: AUGUST 11, 1974, MUJAHID  
MANZIL, WHICH WAS THE RALLYING POINT OF KASHMIRI  
NATIONALIST AND RESISTANCE POLITICS, SRINAGAR

Fellow Countrymen,

I am grateful to you for having come here at my invitation and for the trouble you took in undertaking a long and arduous journey in the process. I am also fully aware of the fact that in accepting my invitation and,

thus, honoring me, you have shown deep interest in the present-day problems facing our State. This deep interest of yours has prompted me to call you here for mutual consultations and exchange of views. I welcome you, friends, most heartily and pray that this consultative assembly may succeed in its purpose, and we may all have the privilege of furthering the best interests of the people of our state. I regret that it has not been possible in this two-day Conference to provide sufficiently adequate arrangements for your board and lodge suitable to your status. Beg sahib's preoccupations and ailment in Delhi, and my own multifarious engagements may have left something to be desired in your reception and care which, I hope, you will forgive. If for the high purpose for which we have convened here, you have had to bear any inconvenience, I hope you will not take it amiss.

Friends, you are fully aware that to end political uncertainty and the existing instability in our State, a series of talks have been going on between the Prime Minister, Mrs. Indira Gandhi, and myself for the last two years. Even today, my colleague, Mr. M. A. Beg and the Prime Minister's representative, Mr. Parthasarthy, are engaged in furthering this important dialogue. Even though it is not possible to say with certainty what the scope and ultimate results of these talks are going to be yet, I cannot but make you conscious of my hope as to their success, because it is my belief that however difficult the problem, it can be solved with good-will, candor, and mutual trust. These talks were initiated two years ago during my exile when in a meeting with the Prime Minister she expressed the wish of opening a new chapter in Kashmir. I am sure that she wished with sincere intention to forget old issues and bitterness and to open a new chapter in the history of our State. This is the source of my optimism.

Whereas our talks with the Prime Minister and exchange of views with central leaders have sent a wave of happiness, hope, and trust in the people of our State and country, there are some elements in this country and abroad who have been discomfited by them. Every other day, all kinds of rumors are afloat, speculation is agog, and it appears that some people are not happy with the existing congenial atmosphere of conciliation and concord. They are bent upon foiling it at any cost by spreading the fog of misunderstandings.

I would like all you friends to beware of the unholy designs and disruptionist intentions of these people, and it is my desire that you should deal with them in your own capacity in order to combat their mischief. Our State is passing through an important and delicate historical phase, and the country's enemies, both within and without, are only eager to exploit

our mistakes to their own advantage. I gave you the trouble of coming here so that we may put our heads together and think about the problems and future of our State. I would like to benefit from your ideas and suggestions at a time when our talks with central leaders have entered a decisive stage. Permit me to refresh your memory by referring to the dark past that has given birth to the existing problems and state of affairs.

When our freedom struggle started in 1931, it aimed at providing employment and business rights to the State's Muslims. However, we soon realized that the plight of Muslims and their problems were not limited to them alone but extended to the State's Hindus, Sikhs, Buddhists, and members of other denominations. Also, as long as an autocratic and feudal system existed in the State, it would not be possible to rid its people of poverty, deprivation, exploitation, and intellectual backwardness. This realization of ours provided a spur to the purport of our freedom struggle and widened its scope. Thus in 1938, we changed the Muslim Conference into the National Conference and initiated a decisive struggle against the system of feudal aristocracy which had eaten into the very vitals of our life and future for many centuries. It is a mere historical coincidence that the first ever united and concerted front of the people's revolt against this tyrannical autocracy was started at a time when the State's reins were in the hands of a Hindu Maharaja. But, I consider this to be a mere coincidence. Even earlier, Pathans and Sikhs had made the State a target of their indiscriminate loot and plunder without and distinction of religion and sect. They let loose such cruelties on our people that even after many centuries of their occurrence, their memory stirs our very being. Mughals and Pathans were both Muslims, but as tyranny and oppression know no religion, Kashmiri Muslim, though their co-religionists, could not be safe from their cruelty and oppression. It is necessary to state this fact here, because, even today, there are people who are deliberately trying to spread the mistaken idea that Kashmir's struggle for freedom was a Muslim revolt against a Hindu Maharaja. Our struggle was not against any person or dynasty. It was against a system of government, life, and power. It was our faith that the life of the people could not be changed without changing the system first. We stood up against this tyranny and oppression that had deprived us of honor, integrity, self-respect, and confidence. This is the reason why conscientious and foresighted leaders of Jammu answered our call and joined us shoulder-to-shoulder to unitedly continue our struggle against tyranny and oppression.

In 1947, when India was divided, the rulers of the State were given the right to join either of the two newly-created dominions, viz.; India and Pakistan, or remain independent. All this happened while my colleagues and I were either in jails or in externment. But soon after my release, I protested against this right of rulers of States and repeated my stand that since sovereignty lies with the people, the people and not the rulers had the right to decide their own future. This stand was quite consistent with the ideals of our freedom movement, and as President of the State People's Conference, I had demanded this right throughout the country and even struggles toward this goal. Fortunately for us, while India supported this stand of ours, Pakistan, unfortunately, preferred the right of rulers to that of the people, and this was the beginning of our differences with Pakistan. Later, when Pakistani rulers realized that we were not prepared to budge an inch from our ideals and objectives, they attempted to overwhelm us by the use of force. On this occasion, India not only upheld our ideas but gave us full support to effectively combat Pakistani aggression. It is not my intention to waste your time by repeating the historical facts of Pakistani aggression and Indian defense for you are also a part of this history. I only want to drive home the point that the basis of our friendship and closer ties with India was the principle that the future of the State could be decided only by its people. It should be pointed out here that whenever I refer to the State and its people, I have in mind not only the Kashmir Valley and Kashmiris, but all the three regions, viz.; Jammu, Kashmir, and Ladakh, and its 46 lakh inhabitants irrespective of their religious and linguistic affiliations, who struggled shoulder-to-shoulder during the freedom movement.

I am not saying this out of any expediency or temporary emotions, but it is my faith that just like their common past, the future of Jammu, Kashmir, and Ladakh is also closely interrelated. Despite the geographical contradictions, the history of these three regions has a historical continuity and basic harmony, and I cannot afford to think of them as distinct and separate entities. I have dedicated the whole of my life toward the struggle for the poor, helpless, and oppressed people, and the aim of the movement spearheaded by me was not only to seek a place of honor and freedom for the inhabitants of the Kashmir Valley alone but to inculcate a sense of honor and freedom in the minds of the entire people of the State. As to whether we really succeeded in our mission, there is room for debate, but I am sure that even our most bitter critics cannot deny that the basic aim of our movement was to relieve the people of Jammu, Kashmir, and

Ladakh of feudal autocracy and exploitation. The need for repeating this settled fact has risen, because even today some selfish and anti-people elements are busy in creating misunderstandings between the people of these three regions to scuttle our energies, weaken our unity, and mar our future. I have troubled you to this meet to keep you aware of the ugly design of these elements who are out to create a wedge in the unity and integrity of our State. I have pledged to struggle hard to preserve the integrity of our State and am out to seek your active cooperation in this direction.

At this point, I take this opportunity to assure the unfortunate people of "Azad Kashmir" in the language of "Ghalib" this:

Whenever we have referred to Kashmir and whenever we shall refer to it in the future, we always mean the State of Jammu and Kashmir as it existed before August 1947. My colleagues share my firm conviction that our State is indivisible and that we should continue our struggle to preserve its solidarity and integrity.

The year 1947 was an important turning point in the struggle of the people of our State for achieving the right of self-determination. After having resisted Pakistani aggression with timely intervention of Indian forces and active support of Indian leaders we then started planning our future. It goes to the credit of late Pandit Nehru that consistent with his long-standing policy of support for our ideals, programs, and convictions he lived up to our best expectations at that critical juncture as well. He was quite conscious of the fact that the Muslim majority of Kashmir had reposed great confidence and trust in India by resisting Pakistani aggression, and, as such, it was obligatory on the part of India to give assurances and guarantees in order to justify our confidence and remove any apprehensions regarding the future. This line of thinking and mental attitude culminated in India's recognizing a special status for Kashmir and enshrining it in the Constitution of India as well. I am briefly trying to point to the historical development which climaxed in the firm and recognized political relationship and constitutional position between India and Kashmir.

My intention is to invite your attention to the political and social background which led the Indian leaders to accord a special status to Kashmir within the Indian Union.

On this occasion, I would not like to go into the details as to what happened in August 1953, and who was responsible for it. Since I was a party to this drama, it is not necessary that you should accept my version alone.

It is better to leave this issue to future historians to unsort. But you will not deny the fact that these happenings of August 1953 shook the very foundations of the confidence and trust of the people of Kashmir, and the methods adopted subsequently by those in power did not behoove any democratic and civilized nation. I do not want to pronounce my personal judgment on all the post-1953 happenings. The whole period is before you, and I would like to know from you whether you are satisfied with the progress of emotional integration of the people of Kashmir with India during the last 21 years. Do you honestly feel that the foundations of democracy and secularism in the State are more stable than before? Can you honestly dare say that the shackles of distrust between Kashmiris and India are broken? Finally, does the atmosphere of mutual understanding and confidence prevail in the same manner as it prevailed before 1953? Have the people here got the clean administration which they have long yearned for? Were they freed from the morass of unemployment and poverty?

I do not make these queries to come out victorious in the interlocation nor am I impatient to prove that the excesses and injustices inflicted upon me should not have been perpetrated. I just want to drive home the point that our objective is yet to be fulfilled, and we shall have to make amends and introspect for the lost time. Leave alone my person; it is not that important. Today you find me among yourselves, but tomorrow you may not. And all the questions posed by me to you might be asked by someone else. It is my ardent desire that you underline the importance of these questions rather than the person who poses them.

India has chosen democracy, secularism, and socialism as its goals, and we are all conscious of the fact that we still have to go a long way in achieving these goals, but despite our shortcomings, it is really heartening and satisfactory to note that we have clearly located and demarcated our goals and ideals. The first milestone on this road is democracy.

Democracy does not merely mean conducting elections every five years, but in substance it is a way of life and a way of thinking. In a democracy, the majority will prevail, but then it is equally incumbent on the majority to respect and defend the legitimate interests and sentiments of minorities and to dispel their apprehensions. The greatest test of the success of Indian democracy lies in the extent to which its minorities feels secure and content. It is really welcome that the Hindu population of the State feels emotionally integrated with the Indian people, but this joy is incomplete so long as the Muslim majority of the State does not equally share this

happiness. I am not saying this as a Muslim, but as an Indian and, more so, because all through my life, I have never reconciled myself to the principles of the “two-nation” theory. I consider Muslims as part and parcel of India’s history, past, and future, and I am of the firm conviction that every inhabitant of this country must be given a sense of participation in the country’s affairs. In light of the complex political history of the State, it becomes all the more pertinent to ensure that the Muslims of the State feel satisfied with their relationship with India, mentally and morally, because, strangely enough, they constitute a majority and minority at one and the same time. I have regrets and genuine complaints over the manner in which this important aspect of the problem was either ignored or left uncared for during the last 22 years with the result that this grave lapse was responsible for breeding extremist Hindu chauvinism in Jammu and militant Muslim communalism in Kashmir, thereby weakening the secular character of our whole movement. This important aspect cannot be overlooked while discussing the constitutional relationship of India and Kashmir, and I seek guidance in this regard from my friends from Jammu and Ladakh as to what could (and ought to) be done to ensure emotional integration and security for the Muslims of the State.

It has often been alleged that the special position of the State is, in fact, a symbol of Kashmiri domination over Jammu and Ladakh. I am of the opinion that such accusations are basically born out of bias, and my mind is explicitly clear and vivid in this regard. Firstly, the special status for Kashmir as envisaged by the Constitution of India is not a boon for us but a simple acknowledgement of the special circumstances which constitute a part of our past and future. Secondly, the special status is not meant for Kashmir province alone, and those who oppose it only jeopardize their own interests and put their house on fire in jealousy of their neighbor.

Today, when there is a growing demand in the country regarding reconsiderations of state-center relations, and even those states which had delegated their powers to the center voluntarily are making a demand for internal autonomy. It is surprising as well as painful that some of our short-sighted friends, out of sheer dislike for us, are impatient to surrender their rights and privileges to the center. What is amusing is that all this is being done in the name of so-called national unity and emotional integration. It is my belief that in a federal set-up, the best way for emotional integration and national unity is not the over-centralization of powers but its decentralization leading to the restoration of power in the hands of the federating units, which have acceded to be a part of the federation of their

own free will. This alone, I am sure, can deal a death blow to national chauvinism and mischievous communalism. In light of the present over-centralization of powers, our country is gradually tending to be a unitary rather than a federal state, and I do not consider this trend as a good omen for the solidarity and integrity of the nation.

So far as the domination of Kashmir over other regions is concerned, I consider it a fabrication of facts and an outcome of a fear-complex. Friends, on this point I would like to assure you that there is nothing of the sort in our minds, and we are dead-set against any domination of one region over another. The broad outlines of the internal constitutional set-up of the State, drafted by the steering committee of the State People's Convention in 1968, is a broad reflection of our thinking and stand in this regard. Although this document is not final in our opinion, it amply indicates our resolve not to allow concentration of power at one particular level, but to decentralize it to the district, block, and panchayat levels, thereby reducing the chances of domination of one region over another to a cipher. There is ample scope for discussion of this broad constitutional outline, but I feel it goes a long way in reflecting our thinking in this matter. I have requested Sheikh Ghulam Mohammad Bhadarwahi to supply copies of this document to you for appraisal.

I have drawn your attention to some of the basic things and want you to enter into a frank discussion on the matter. By inviting you to this meet, my sole endeavor is to have the benefit of your suggestions and advice, and I fervently hope that you will rise above personal consideration and bias and give me the benefit of your view point regarding the problems confronting the State. I have explained to you my problems and difficulties. I stand by my commitments to India from 1947 to 1953 and shall continue to do so, but what has happened since then up to now has created difficulties in my way. They have also given rise to some apprehensions in the minds of the people of the State, but despite this, I have respect for my word and would like to sincerely fulfill my pledges. My difficulties—how can I assure the Muslim majority of the State that their hopes, urges, aspirations, and vital interests as also their culture and future are not only safe in India but far safer than in Pakistan? How can I guarantee them that the events of 1953 shall not be repeated in future? How can I convince them that there will not be any constitutional hurdles or legal difficulties in the way of implementing our political and economic goals as enshrined in Naya Kashmir?



I am prepared to forget the past bitterness because I have faith in the future, but then the vital question is, how am I to inculcate in the minds of my people a faith concerning my commitments? This question has assumed much significance before me, and one chief reason for having invited you here is to enlist your help and assistance in find solutions to the aforesaid questions and difficulties facing me.

Let us pool our energies together and find solutions to these problems in an atmosphere and spirit of cordiality, good-will, mutual trust, and confidence. A solution is only possible if we sincerely rise above personal considerations and partisan ends. I am hopeful that all of you shall put forth your views sincerely and candidly so that they may guide my path in the current dialogue as also in our future struggle.

3.14 PRESIDENTIAL ADDRESS, DELIVERED BY SHEIKH  
MOHAMMAD ABDULLAH AT THE ANNUAL SESSION OF ALL  
JAMMU AND KASHMIR NATIONAL CONFERENCE, HELD  
AT IDGAH GROUNDS, JAMMU, APRIL 24, 1976

Beg Sahib, honorable delegates, and friends,

As I stand here, I find it difficult to decide whether I should thank you for electing me as President of National Conference or complain against your choice. Undoubtedly, it should be my pride and a source of great satisfaction to head an organization, a movement, which not only involved all the moments of my political existence for a continuity of four decades and a half, but epitomized in its struggles and vicissitudes the political history of the State. For electing me as the president of such a great organization, you have, indeed, demonstrated your trust in me, your faith and sincerity, and I have all the reasons to express my deep gratitude. For, may I ask you, after I have thanked you, to permit me to register my complaint. In the heat of your love for me and in your extreme feelings of trust, you have overlooked not only my age but the state of my health, as also my present responsibilities, which are extraordinarily heavy. At my age, one is not left with all the nerve to shoulder additional responsibilities; and I am sure, you have not in your selection given enough thought to my duties as the Head of the State Government, which, naturally, engage me for most of my time.

Since, however, your choice has fallen on me again at this stage, in spite of other demands on my time and attention, I will take this as your order

and endeavor to do my utmost in the fulfillment of my obligations. I respect your decision and believe you have been motivated by important considerations and, let me repeat, I will leave no stone unturned to justify your expectations, disregarding limitations set on me by my health and other diversions.

All my life, I have only thought of better times for our people, and nothing will satisfy me more than spending the rest of my life in pursuit of the realization of those dreams. Indeed, it is in seeking this fulfillment that I welcome added responsibilities every day, in defiance of persistent advice by physicians, friends, and other well-wishers. I am goaded by the thought that there is a lot to do while the time is short, and it is this haunting sense of reality that I want all of us to do the most in the shortest time possible. It is this realization, again, that has given me the heart to take up this new responsibility with the hope that I will be aided by complete cooperation from you all.

As you would all know, the presidentship of the National Conference is not a new experience for me. This has been my privilege and honor for many long years earlier as well. Since the inception of the organization in 1938, with a short gap or two, I was almost continuously the president up to 1952; and, in retrospect, it gives me great pleasure to recount that whatever was achieved in securing and strengthening the principles of socialism, secularism, and democracy in our state was all due to the political texture set and nurtured by the National Conference, which decidedly is the lone claimant to the legacy of such an eventful past and, consequently, lights the paths to our future and the realization of our dreams. In this context, my election as the president does not merely symbolize a historical continuity but also depicts the degree of our affinity with all the traditions of the national movement and the unparalleled struggle it entailed. We, however, may not be able to step forward if we do not comprehend the new political backgrounds or the fresh historical compulsions. History is a process to follow which it is not enough to get engrossed in current times, but it is necessary also to profit by the solid wisdom proffered by the past. There never was a revelation that was not based on an old truth, and in both science and history, new and old are relative terms.

This session of the All Jammu and Kashmir National Conference is being held in this historical city of Jammu in a new political background, and all those who are aware of the history, characteristics, and historical role of this party will have no difficulty in grasping the political import and

the historical importance of the reemergence of this party on the political map of the country. All the same, it would be logical to assume that a blot, which eclipsed the party's fate and its history during a dark patch of twenty-three years, deprived a whole generation of intimate knowledge of the party's glorious past or even rendered them hostile to it. It is our job to enlighten such young men and women and liberate them from wrong notions and baseless doubts. To acquaint them with their great history and greater traditions is not only a historical necessity but also a duty we owe to them. I expect it from all members of the National Conference, howsoever they are placed, that they will treat this as their first duty.

Historically speaking, the name of the National Conference is closely associated with the first people's movement in the State which was launched in 1931 under the auspices of the Muslim Conference. This movement in its earliest phase was confined to demands of certain rights to serve the government departments or some other concessions of political nature, but the scope of the movement soon widened to the extent that it caught the attention of the non-Muslims of the State also. Many of them joined us in our campaign against feudal rule. This helped the Muslims of the State to realize gradually that the fight against exploitation, against tyranny of despotism was not to be merely a Muslim crusade but had to be waged by the mass of people spread over the State suffering equally as poor subjects, voiceless laborers, and suppressed farmers. It dawned on them that the movement had per necessity to be reshaped in a combined and national pattern. It was this attitude to politics by the majority community of the State which caused the Muslim Conference to be redefined and renamed as the National Conference, and, thus, did our secular politics get a start and our non-communal trends a form. It gave a new direction to our movement and brought us closer than ever to the national movement launched for the liberation of the subcontinent. While this change in our political program and our aims constituted a material turn, it was of great significance to the political environment in India. The communal politics of the Muslim League had effectively challenged the secular ideas and forces of unity among Hindus and Muslims by preaching communalism and Muslim isolation. Right at the time, the Muslims of Kashmir extended their hand toward their non-Muslim brethren and decided to combine and continue the struggle jointly. No student of history can afford to underrate the importance of this revolutionary change in the politics of the State while assessing the political personality of the National Conference and its historical role, which did shock the highest

quarters of communal politics and weaken its strongholds. For this we, in the State, had to face the wrath of arch-communalists and sworn reactionaries, Muslims and Hindus, from all sides, who did all they could to divert us again toward sectarian politics.

Powerful Muslims were upset at our secular ideas and influential Hindu reactionaries resented our campaign against feudal rule. While, on the one side, we were hated for our stand that the theory of two-nations was not only wrong but also misleading, on the other side, we were suspect in the eyes of Hindu reactionaries for our strife against a system that happened to be headed by a Hindu Maharajah in our State. The history of the National Conference, page after page, would yield evidence that this organization faced all these onslaughts unwaveringly and boldly, though it is my duty and pride to acknowledge, at this point, the most valuable moral support we got at every step from the great leaders of the Indian movement, Mahatma Gandhi, Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru, Maulana Abul Kalam Azad, Khan Abdul Ghaffar Khan, and others. Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru, who had rushed to be with us in our "Quit Kashmir" movement in 1946, was arrested by the Maharaja's men.

Our fight in the National Conference against the feudal system was not based on any negative attitude. It was part of a clearly defined and positive economic and political movement. We did not merely desire the termination of the Maharaja's rule. It was our aim to build a democratic set-up, a new pattern of economy and social welfare. We gave a precise shape to our dreams and enunciated it in the historical document known as "Naya Kashmir," which demarcates our goals and our political destination. It is this document which provides the axis for all our political and economic campaigns, and until we are not able to realize these documented dreams, we will continue struggling. We have initiated some steps already toward achievement of these goals, but, as long as we are not able to banish poverty and suffering and as long as there is a single child left without opportunities of education, we will not be true to the blood of our martyrs, who shed it to fill the contours of the dream-map of "Naya Kashmir."

In the history of all political organizations, there are always some stages or difficult curves in negotiating which reveal its ideological character and also the caliber of its leadership. Such a difficult moment arrived for us on 15th August, 1947, when that unfortunate announcement to partition the country was made. The whole fiber of our movement and our political path was put to a very difficult test. By God's grace, not only did we attain distinctive success for ourselves but, in its achievement, the National

Conference imparted a good deal of meaning to the secular character of Indian Democracy.

The partition not only divided the country but, as it is your painful memory and mine, raised such a storm of wild fanaticism and mutual contempt for human life that the joys of freedom got submerged all around. The wounds inflicted by these communal riots and civil strife are so deep that they are bleeding even after 28 years. But, God be thanked again, it was Kashmir alone that provided a safe island amidst a sea of fire and held close to its bosom the Kashmiri traditions of communal harmony and peace. The leaders of the National Conference and all its workers had a trying time but they all held to their ideals in the face of disturbing provocations all around. Whatever accounts one may read of these times, it would not be possible to gauge the extent of the strain—mental, physical, and organizational—the men and women of the National Conference had to bear in order to be true to their faith and, today, not even our worst enemies can accuse us of any wavering or the slightest diversion from our course, even at that delicate and delicate time. But what we have to remember is that all this came about not as a chance or accident, but as a result of the deliberate and meaningful policies of the National Conference and its mature leadership. Those who may choose not to give enough importance to this aspect of our organization may not fully comprehend the basic characteristic of our movement.

While we were still braving this ordeal, we had to face another. The declaration of Freedom for the people living in British India endangered the chances of liberty for crores of people living in the Princely States. The British conceded the right of decision to the Princes, rather than to the people, to accede to either India or Pakistan, or even to remain independent of the two. How could we accept this? We clarified our stand in this respect and advised the Maharaja to consult the people before he said anything. Even before a decision, we raised our voice for absolute freedom and also made it clear that the National Conference, not withstanding the partition, upholds its rejection of the two-nation theory and refuses to base its policies on religious or communal considerations. During the mad times after 1947, when many known leaders fell from their standards and their secular ideas got shaken, the undaunted faith of the leaders of the National Conference in secularism and cultural unity was in perfect harmony with the ideals of the National Conference and its traditions. It was only as a consequence of our deep-rooted respect for human values and principles and to protect our paths to the appointed goals that the National

Conference jumped in the fight against Pakistan, when it sought to change its attitude and its thought-patterns by force. I feel tempted to quote Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru's description of the Kashmiri people's war against Pakistan. He wrote,

Srinagar was in peril and the invader was almost on its doorsteps. There was no administration left there, no troops, no police. Light and power had failed, and there were vast numbers of refugees there; and yet Srinagar functioned without obvious panic, and the shops were open, and people went about the streets. What was this miracle due to? Sheikh Mohammad Abdullah, his colleagues of the National Conference, and their unarmed volunteers—Muslim, Hindu, and Sikh—took charge of the situation, kept order, and prevented panic. It was a wonderful piece of work they did at a moment when nerves of most people might have failed them. They did this because they had strength in their organization, but even more so, because they were determined to protect their country from the ruthless invader who was destroying their country and trying to compel them to join Pakistan.

This intervention by the people of Kashmir against the invaders from Pakistan constitutes a glorious chapter in the history of the National Conference; and without any hesitation, I would like to emphasize that if our organization and its leaders had not stepped forward to protect the honor as also the freedom of the people, in a situation fraught with great dangers, the history of the State alone would not have taken a different direction, but the history of the subcontinent as a whole. Again, the National Conference, at that juncture, by fighting against Pakistani forces, not only imparted extraordinary strength to secularism but also cleared ways for permanent ties with India. This historical reality needs to be repeatedly affirmed, since some of our critics are likely to forget all about it in their effort to analyze the reemergence of the National Conference. My only concern here is to provide the correct background.

I would also like to reiterate that our present relations with the rest of the country have only ensued as a consequence of the policies of the National Conference and the sincere efforts of its leaders. In this important context, the National Conference stands as a clear symbol of the common political history of Kashmir and the rest of India, and also of their cultural affinity; and, as such, it should be our political and moral obligation to keep this symbol alive.

In October 1947, when as a consequence to the invasion from Pakistan, the Government of the State fell in complete disarray, it was my lot and that of my comrades to shoulder the responsibilities of a government and organize a defense. I feel great pride in recalling the historical role of our organization and my comrades during those frightful days. It certainly strengthened the roots of the Conference and all that it stood for and made it clear that our ties with India were not forged on any personal considerations, but on grounds of common principles and ideals. This was the reason that a special status was guaranteed to us under Article 370 of the Indian Constitution. We were assured by the top leaders at the center that even though we would constitute a part of the Indian Federation, we would be absolutely free to execute our programs as laid down by us in "Naya Kashmir." It was, indeed, as a result of mutual trust and agreement between us that in 1947, after assuming responsibilities of the State Government, the National Conference did all it could to help in the tasks of defense.

During a short period of about six years that followed, the National Conference took a number of revolutionary measures to uplift the down-trodden masses. Some of the steps to its credit were the immediate termination of hereditary rule, freedom from the age-old feudal system of *Jagirs* and *Chaks*, the liberation of farmers from the grip of "*Sabukars*" and "*Wad-dars*," writing off old debts, return of mortgaged land to the owners, setting up ceilings for ownership of land and distributing additional land free among the landless. This was a period of achievements for the National Conference but, unfortunately, also the forerunner of a fall from ideals. The political power that came to us to help could, on the one hand, be wielded by us in giving material shape to some of our dreams, but, on the other hand, it put us on difficult trials. On the one hand, we were trying to bring our old struggles to their logical end by trying to remove poverty and suffering, and, on the other, some of our comrades got diverted in the pursuit of power for their personal ends and, thus, started digging the very roots of our movements.

The thought of power dazzled their eyes, and they could see neither their past nor their future. They got lost in the glamor of the present. They forgot that power was merely a means to preserve values and not an end in and of itself. The result was naturally as could be expected. History provides evidence that whenever any political party treats power not as a means to avowed ends but as the very aim of existence, the party, notwithstanding its past or its vitality, stooped and ultimately fell. That is what

happened to the great organization, your National Conference, too. In August 1953, those who had sacrificed values to personal power plotted against the vitals of the party under the influence of lust and greed. It is not necessary for me to go into details about what was done by whom as not only you and I, but the whole world knows as well. It should be enough to say that after a length of 22 years even those who had played major roles in the conspiracy hatched in 1953 had to confess that it was all based on lies and fabrications. This, however, did damage the National Conference and put its leadership in disarray, with the result that the organization was captured by those about whom the less said the better. All those people will be judged by the history, and the people of the State have already given their verdict about them. All that I would say in this respect is that I could see God's hand in it. Perhaps, we had to prove our fortitude and our sincerity in our beliefs and faith. God be thanked again that we proved ourselves true. I should also point out that the people of the State refused to succumb to the temptations or terrors which followed 1953, and it was only a particular section of the Conference which succumbed to them. Indeed, the common people, time and again, rose to express their condemnation of the regime that was foisted on them. I would also like to pay my tributes to those of my comrades who withstood all onslaughts and did not allow any tools of coercion or suppression to weaken their will or alter their path.

While this period of 22 years tested our patience and put us on trial, it turned out to be a dark and long patch for the State. An artificial and exhibitionist show of false progress was put up to cover the debilitating roots of the economy of the State. Instead of utilizing the generous aid provided by the central government to prop up the economy of the State, their huge monies became the handmaiden of corruption. Large sums were squandered on unproductive plans. Shows were organized to achieve cheap popularity and to divert people from their woes. All sorts of methods were used to kill the slightest sense of self-respect among our people, and they were made to live on doles and alms. A people who had sacrificed the dear lives of their young to attain their right to honorable living were corrupted, fed on doles, and rendered helpless in their complete dismal state. Their comprehension got blurred to the extent of accepting darkness as real light. I was watching all this along with my steadfast companions with extreme pain; and whenever we made efforts to rekindle a light, our voice was promptly muzzled, and we were put behind bars. This state of affairs continued for 22 years. But it ended as the longest night does



one fine morning when the Indian authorities and the people here realized that even after throwing in millions and millions of rupees, the political and economic condition of the State was increasingly deteriorating. They realized that if this state of affairs was allowed to continue, Kashmir, which could become a political and ideological example and a show-window for India, would become a cancerous problem with possibilities of affecting the whole of the country. It was this sense of reality that moved the leadership of the central government to turn a new page and forget past history. A dialogue was started in May 1972, which ended in February 1975, in the shape of an Accord between us and the central government. I concede that this Accord did not satisfy all our demands, nor did it conform entirely to our stand. The only consideration that led us to accept the offer of the central leadership and the offer of the Prime Minister Mrs. Indira Gandhi, was the fast deteriorating condition of the State. For our personal reasons, it would have been convenient to watch the seriousness of the situation from a distance. We could have consoled ourselves with the thought that the responsibility for the confusion was not ours but of the Indian leaders, who had ignored the accepted leadership of the State and, instead, trusted a few opportunists and self-seekers. If we had chosen to adopt this attitude, it would have been escapist and would have amounted to shirking our responsibility toward our people.

This attitude might have provided some personal satisfaction to but would have yielded nothing toward the salvation of our people. The only alternative was to rise above personal considerations and step forward to seek possibilities of saving the State from utter collapse. This course was rather difficult to adopt, as it jeopardized our own honor and good name. Besides our enemies, our own friends could have seriously misunderstood us. But, as I said earlier, it was more a question of the life or death of our people than of my reputation or that of my comrades. In such a circumstance, we accepted the challenge in spite of serious dangers and, apparently, insurmountable difficulties; and, as you all know, we are trying our very best to save this sinking boat of the State. Whether we will be able to steer it out of the many whirlpools is a matter which the future will judge. For my comrades and I, it is a matter of great satisfaction that we are trying to improve things against all odds and amidst possibilities of personal hazards.

In the words of the great Urdu poet Mir Taqi Mir,

Defeat or victory's a matter of fate  
Yet this frail heart put up a brave fight.

The resurgence of the National Conference continues to be a matter for comment and even debate in some quarters. There are some who try to present this event in wrong colors due to misunderstanding or ignorance. There are others who do it on purpose for their personal interests. But, for us, the National Conference stands as a symbol of our struggles and our dreams. The personality of our people cannot be imagined adequately in isolation from the Conference, their great organization. It is this organization and the movement associated with it that taught us honorable politics, respect for principles, and unfolded for us the meaning of values and the distinctness of our personality. How is it possible to disown this organization that gave us our identity? It is no consideration whether we look shorter in stature or longer in this or that organization. But a negative attitude will surely reveal a sense of inferiority. Such an attitude would not be in harmony with correct human conduct or even the basic principles of politics. Political organizations do not grow in thin air, nor do they descend from the heavens. Living movements are born here on our earth, and to keep them going, it is people like you and I who work with the sweat of their brow and offers of blood. It is, again, the transparent sincerity of people, the sacrifices of common folk, the ups and downs of movements, and the twists of history that go in the making of an organization. This is the reason for the peculiarities or the individuality of each organization. A personality is not created by patchwork or by craft. No human being with last long with the help of artificial kidneys; and, what is true of human lives can be true of political organizations too. It was, therefore, for this reason that when we were confronted with the question of supplanting the Plebiscite Front with a new organization, we tried to seek an answer in the context of our history, tradition, movement, and past struggles. In this respect, I explained my ideas in a letter, which I addressed to my colleague and friend, Mirza Afzal Beg, on May 23, 1975, in the following words:

While drawing the contours of our new party, we have to be careful not to lose sight of our basic aims; the history of our struggle to achieve them; the importance of our distinctive role; and the compulsions of present-day circumstances. At no cost should we forget that we are the inheritors of a great past, and we should be careful not to take a false step that might disturb the historical continuity, which, in turn, forms the base for the edifice of our pride. If we break away from our past, we will have no foundation to erect

our future upon. I do not think we should completely wash our hands off our past heritage only because some usurpers succeeded in sabotaging us at a very important juncture of our struggle.

Similarly, I addressed a letter to Syed Mir Qasim on the same date and made my approach clear in the following words:

You will agree with me that no political organization can become alive, purposive, and strong unless it has resolute popular backing. That is possible only when this political organization has behind it the rich asset of a movement, a history, and a struggle with which the people have a sense of association. According to this standard, National Conference is the only organization in our State with which the history of our dreams and aspirations is linked. Every soldier and commander of our freedom movement will bear testimony to the fact that it is under the banner of the National Conference alone that we fought decisive and invigorating battles against a despotic and feudal regime. I hardly need to remind you that after the conversion of the Muslim Conference in 1938, it was the National Conference alone which sympathized and guided the people of the State, at every turn of its political history. Thus, this organization became the valuable heritage of our movement and history.

It has become necessary to say all this in support of the rebirth of the National Conference, because some friends have been forwarding an irrelevant argument to prove our decision wrong. It is said that the National Conference is a regional organization, whereas the Indian National Congress encompassed the whole country. They bring in the aid of metaphors and liken the Congress to an ocean, while simultaneously comparing the National Conference to a canal or rivulet. Others fear that the Accord between us and the center may be endangered by possibilities of rivalry and confrontation. As far as the argument about the respective span of the two organizations is concerned, it doesn't need to be refuted, as it is only too true. But from a strictly historical point of view or in light of the growth of our movement, the argument is irrelevant.

The history of the National Conference, its traditions and struggles, notwithstanding its regional character, formed part of the great freedom movement of India in which all Indians participated without regard for caste or creed. Even so, our respective movements carried their own stamp and bore their distinctive individuality. This fact about our organization

was recognized by Mahatma Gandhi, Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru, and other leading personalities of India. This recognition of a distinct personality and the assertion of an individuality does not negate the unity of India. On the other hand, it projects the political character of our country and its cultural diversity. Just as the regional hues of India combine to decorate and put life in the cultural rainbow of the country, so would the regional character or the individuality of political movements launched in different regions enrich the political system of India. The greatness of an ocean and its span is a natural truth, but its greatness does not lessen the importance of the existence of rivulets, brooks, or springs.

In their own way they too serve and are not irrelevant. We may go further and say that these very water courses, in the other hand, contribute to the glory of an ocean and the power of its waves. Who would, for instance, dispute the grandeur of mountains and their peaks? But the tiny flowers growing at their feet also own a pattern of beauty with a unique appeal. Again, there cannot be two views about the size and volume of an elephant. But there are many who would rather dote on the winsome deer or the chirping sparrow. I am, personally, more aware than many could claim to be of the great history of the Indian National Congress and its role in the war for independence; and, if I am not accused of self-praise, I would even say that I have had the privilege of fighting shoulder-to-shoulder with Gandhiji, Jawaharlal Nehru, Abdul Kalam Azad, and Badshah Khan. I hardly need to be reminded of the eminence of the Indian National Congress. I am more conscious of this than those friends whose association with the Congress is motivated more by personal interests than by any ideological affinity. All the same, I believe also in the political past of the National Conference and its historical role. What is more important, I do not sense any contradiction or clash between the two parallel feelings in the mind. I feel that the apprehensions of a clash or confrontation between the two parties in the State are exaggerated. I would welcome a rivalry between the two, provided it is healthy, purposeful, and constructive. It is not necessary that rivalry should take the aspect of a confrontation, if the top leaders of both the parties and their conscientious workers perceive and pursue their correct roles and strengthen those aims and principles that guided our common struggles for shared values. I have no doubt in my mind that even though we may be treading different paths, we have the same destination; and instead of impeding each other, we may prove to be complementary to each other. In my letter dated 23<sup>rd</sup>

May, 1975, addressed to Mirza Afzal Beg, I explained this point in the following words:

You would agree that even though the scope for the activities of the National Conference was restricted to the State, it was veritably a part and parcel of the freedom movement of India in its undoubted ideological affinity with it and its practical participation. It was for this reason that great leaders of our country were deeply associated with all the events and movements of the National Conference, and among these were the illustrious names of Mahatma Gandhi, Jawaharlal Nehru, Abdul Kalam Azad, and Badshah Khan. Acting with perfect understanding, we had evolved methods of participation without belonging to one organization. In that memorable period of harmony, the need of a merger with the Indian National Congress was never felt by anybody. On the other hand, Pandit Nehru and his colleagues did not only approve the idea of keeping the individuality of the National Conference intact but also felt happy about it. Such an attitude toward our particular needs and problems only proved that the central leaders were positively in favor of letting us retain our identity.

And in my letter to Syed Mir Qasim, I wrote about the inherent relation between the two organizations in the following words:

I affirm the role played by the Indian National Congress in the freedom struggle and subsequent economic reconstruction of the country. There can be no denying of its greatness and capacities. But, in spite of this, if I invite you and your colleagues to the National Conference, it is because cooperation and not confrontation have marked the relationship between the National Conference and the Congress. These two organizations, though organizationally separate, have always worked together on an ideological level. That is why against its struggle against the despotic rule of the Maharaja, the National Conference could always elicit the practical support and active cooperation of the commanders of the Indian freedom struggle. In the "Quit Kashmir" movement of 1946, Shri Jawaharlal Nehru, despite his heavy preoccupations, came to our assistance and was arrested by the then Prime Minister R. C. Kak. Similarly, in 1944, Nehru, Maulana Abdul Kalam Azad, and Badshah Khan came to participate in the annual session of the National Conference in Sopore. In this way, a climate of mutual unity and cooperation was established between the National Conference and the Congress, and it was never felt necessary that the two parties should merge. I can recall vividly that the top leaders of the Congress were so satisfied with

this ideological affinity that they always encouraged us to maintain our individual identity.

In short, I do not regard the separate existence of the National Conference and the Congress as contradictory. They could be considered as extensions of one program for the attainment of one purpose. I would like my friends in the Congress to drive out wrong notions and prejudices from their minds and strive to make the traditional friendship and cooperation between the Congress and the National Conference more purposeful and meaningful, particularly in the present circumstances. As far as I am concerned, I would assure the leaders of the Congress that I have no time for political confrontations and that I am prepared to cooperate with any individual or party who would be willing to toil with me in pursuit of the prosperity of the State. I think a lot of time has been wasted in undesirable confrontations, with the result that much of what could be done for the sake of the State and for the sake of our country as a whole has not been done. My prime concern is how best and how quickly do we remove the poverty of the people, their many woes and deprivations. For this task, I do not only need the cooperation and help of Congressmen alone, but of all parties and individuals. In my support for the rebirth of the National Conference, it was my sole purpose to see this organization as an effective instrument for giving a solid shape to the economic program embodied in its famous document, *Naya Kashmir*, and execute it, so that we may fulfill our pledge to the martyrs who gave their lives for those aims and also justify our roles in the eyes of the coming generations.

So far, economic programs have featured here for political ends; I would now like to make our politics subservient to economic ends and people's welfare. We must not now permit personal or petty political advantages to harm the collective good of the people.

Honorable delegates, before I end, I want to say a few words to you particularly:

It is not necessary for me to relate to you the stories of the great past of the National Conference, its history, and its traditions. Most of you were part of that history. You would be justified in your pride in being the inheritors of such a great legacy. Your organization has given birth to such leaders and workers that they will be remembered for all times for their deeds and sincerity. But we must remember that we cannot bask in the glory of our traditions, or by recounting past deeds. We might manage to live by doing so, but we cannot forge ahead. And if we cannot advance,

our lives are meaningless. If we want to stand as a living people, we will have to tether our past for an onward march rather than allow it to stymie us. It is important, therefore, that we strive for our future rather than express satisfaction with our past. It is due to the efforts of our predecessors, their struggles, and devotion to their aims that we are enjoying the free air of independence. The question of questions is—what are we doing for posterity, as our predecessors did for us? Coming generations should also feel proud of us after 25 or 50 years, when they talk of us.

As I have said already, we have adopted a very difficult course. In a way, we have given up a soft bed and stepped into thorns. We can only succeed by constant action and by remaining alert. The time is now over for slogans or emotional speeches. There is no room for destruction or conflict. An era of development and reconstruction has dawned. It is now a time when we will be judged more by what we do than by what we say. I would, therefore, request you that you now try to understand the demands of modern times rather than waste your time on petty problems, useless debates, and senseless conflicts. We will have to take some unpleasant and unpopular steps in order to strengthen our economy, and it is possible that we may have to swallow bitter remarks by unfriendly and even friendly critics. But this should not deviate us from our path. We are clear in our conscience and sincere in our purpose; and, therefore, we should not seek cheap popularity or short-lived sentiments. Instead, we should work constructively for lasting results. I am sure, as the time passes, the fruits of our work will scare our enemies and make our friends happy. But, all of us need to work hard in order to make that happen. We have to exert ourselves to the maximum in executing our plans, which we have launched to remove poverty from the State. I am sure that you will grasp the demands of the times and the nature of hopes placed in us by the people, and respond to my appeal. It is my hope and wish that the humblest worker among us realizes his responsibility and contributes toward ushering a new dawn of construction and all-round progress.

I will fail in my duty if I do not thank my predecessor, Mirza Mohammad Afzal Beg, the real spirit behind this organization, on my behalf and on behalf of all of you for his memorable role and his sincere services to our cause. Beg sahib has been my friend and fellow-traveller from the very beginning. We have shared all the vicissitudes of a political life. In 1953, when many of my close associates in their lust for power stabbed me and the movement, to which they owed their identity, in the back, Beg sahib stood like a rock in his resolve to continue to be sincere and faithful. I have

always reposed my greatest trust in him. He has been my most loyal and dependable comrade, and I am really proud of his friendship and his personality. He was both founder and president of the Plebiscite Front. When the Front was transformed into the National Conference, he was most appropriately elected its president as well. It was my wish that he continue as president, but he insisted that I take up this responsibility for some time. You can understand how difficult it would be for me to say no to him. I am sure I will be aided in my new responsibility by his cooperation and will profit by his advice.

This is a matter of significance that the first annual session of the National Conference after its re-emergence is being held in the historical city of Jammu. Our traditional and political ties with Jammu are fairly old; and on this occasion, I cannot but remember those respected personalities and friends whose names deserve to be recorded in gold on the pages of our freedom movement. Many of these friends have left this world, and those who are still with us are, as I am, in the last stage of life. No body, however, can dispute the fact that in their joint campaign against feudal rule, communalism, and despotism, the contribution of the people of Jammu was in no way less than that of the people of Kashmir. Indeed, our political history would be incomplete without adequate mention of leaders like Raja Mohammad Akbar Khan of Poonch and S. Budh Singh. Others who deserve mention include Bansilal Suri, S. Mohinder Singh, Dina Nath Kyla, Lala Jagan Nath Advocate, Maulana Abdullah Siakhavi, Haji Wahab-ud-Din, Maulvi Ghulam Hyder Jhandal. I hope that in this new phase of the National Conference, the people of Jammu and their political leaders will play their appointed role.

Dear friends, a few words before concluding: I have placed the present and future of the National Conference, as it is, before you without any exaggeration or distortion. The past of this great organization has remained worthy of being proud of, its present is full of hopes and aspirations, and the future awaits your firm action, resolve, and determination. The teeming millions of our State have set their eyes on you and are looking forward to find the course that you are evolving to shape their destiny, which will enable them to live freely and with dignity.

You have changed the course of storms and by going through various trials and tribulations have brought the caravan of freedom to the present juncture. You have proved that you can offer blood for a cause and none can bend your will and courage. Next to my full faith in Allah, I have trust



and confidence in you and am sure that I will not countenance any change in my faith at any stage of my life.

You have lent fresh vitality to the hard and trying struggle with your sustained enthusiasm. History will always cherish this treasure. During the coming days, however, you will be called upon for a still harder struggle, greater sacrifices, and renewed resolve for accomplishing a prosperous, bright, and secure future.

You are not answerable to the people alone, but also to God Almighty who is watching all your actions. It is this feeling of being answerable that determines your behavior with and treatment of his creatures. They alone can claim true service to God who sincerely and selflessly serve His people.

I wish you to be possessed of courage, determination, and endowed with zeal and vision. I have no words to thank Almighty God, who had enabled you and me to shoulder great responsibilities.

Therefore, let us pray to Him with all the humility at our command for the accomplishment of our dreams, so that He guides us on the path of truth and well-being.

In the end, I, again, thank you for having chosen me for this onerous task.

*(Translated from Urdu)*

### 3.15 SHEIKH MOHAMMAD ABDULLAH'S VIEW EXPLAINED: SECOND PLENARY SESSION, J & K PEOPLE'S CONVENTION, JUNE 8-13, 1970

“You have come here, and I would like you to realize the importance of the occasion and accordingly consider the matter, which is before you. It will largely depend upon the result of your deliberations, whether you give peace to the people of this region or allow them to continue facing miseries to which they have been subjected for such a long time,” said Sheikh Mohammad Abdullah inaugurating the session of the Jammu and Kashmir State People's Convention held in Mujahid Manzil, from 8th to 13th June, 1970. “But, before starting the deliberations,” he said, “you shall have to fix your objective, which you want to achieve. Unless the objective is fixed in your mind, you will not be able to come to the right conclusions.

### *Our Objective*

Now, the question arises as to what is our objective, and why we are gathered here in this Convention. Objectives could be many, but, as far as we are concerned, the main objective of this Convention is to secure peace for the people of this region. We feel that without peace no country can develop and no nation can progress. How can we achieve peace, and what means do we possess for this purpose?

### *We Want Peace*

For the last 22 years, the Kashmir dispute has been staring at us, and nobody had realized more than us that we can neither develop our State nor can we enjoy the fruits of freedom and democracy unless we have peace in our State. So, we have gathered here in order to evolve a solution of the problem which will not only give peace to the State, but will also contribute toward peace in the tension-torn subcontinent, which includes India and Pakistan. If these two great countries could live in peace and harmony between themselves, it is bound to have a very healthy effect on the people of the entire region.

### *Indo-Pak Importance in SEA and Middle East*

Continuing Sheikh sahib said, “I well remember what President Nasser had told me when I had the honor of meeting him during my Haj pilgrimage. He said, ‘India and Pakistan are the two great countries on whose stability and peace will depend the freedom and stability of the whole of South Asia and Middle Eastern countries.’ Elaborating on this statement, President Nasser said that, ‘all Middle-Eastern countries and South Asian lands are small in size as well as population, and if the conditions in India and Pakistan continue to remain disturbed and relations between the two strained, it is bound to have a very unhealthy effect on the whole region.’

### *Indo-Pak Peace and Amity Essential*

We should, therefore, deliberate on the matter before us with this background in our mind. Whatever solution may strike your mind, you shall have to test it with this yardstick—whether it will ensure Indo-Pak peace and harmony, and whether it can give peace to the 5-million people of this

State. You cannot achieve peace if your objective is not to part with what you have got, unmindful of the fact that the attitude of possessiveness contributes to peace and conflict in the subcontinent. You do not then give first priority to peace but to hold on to what you have got in your possession by any means. It is because of this that I am making it incumbent on you to clearly fix your objective in your mind before you start deliberating upon the problem before you. If we are all agreed upon the objective, then I have no doubt in my mind that there will be no difficulty in finding a way out. But, if we are doubtful in our objective, then our deliberations will not yield any results. Our brethren in India and Pakistan as well as their governments, and the world at large, should understand clearly the aims and objectives that we have fixed for this Convention.

### *Our Hallmark Objectivity*

We can deliberate on this delicate problem objectively only if we keep our minds free from prejudice and hatred, no matter what injustices we may have suffered. We are a part of the subcontinent and we cannot run away from this geographical reality. Our future is, therefore, closely linked with the future of India and Pakistan. When President Nasser himself could say that the future of his country is largely linked politically with that of the subcontinent, we too are a part of it. Both India and Pakistan are our neighbors. We cannot, therefore, hate one and love the other. We, on the other hand, must realize that we are a limb of the same body, and our peace, prosperity, and freedom are largely dependent on the peace, prosperity, and freedom of our two great neighbors.

Unfortunately, our State has become a bone of contention between the two, and we are caught as if between two millstones. We want to extricate ourselves from this position, and this can only be achieved if our efforts are directed toward creating peace and harmony between India and Pakistan. In their friendship alone lies our salvation; and in their permanent enmity, our perpetual ruin. Therefore, if we visualize it as our main objective, then we cannot nurse feelings of hate either for the one or the other.

### *Kashmir Not a Territorial Dispute*

We seek a solution that will give us peace. The question may be asked: For the last 22 years, efforts have been wanting in finding a solution to the Kashmir dispute; were these countries not really interested? The United

Nations Organization was started in order to establish peace in the world, and the Kashmir dispute has continued to remain on its agenda for all these years. Were not the efforts of the UNO sincerely directed toward achieving the objective of peace on the subcontinent? It is possible that they were, but we also see that what is happening the world is quite different. Every country in the world gives first priority to her own national interest, whether that contributes to peace or not, and the UNO is a forum for all the member countries. If all the member countries would have given first priority to peace and deliberated on each and every dispute of which the organization is seized, with this objective in mind alone, things would have been quite different, and the world would not have been torn by so many bloody disputes. There would have been no Arab-Israeli conflict nor the Indo-China war. It is the same with the Kashmir dispute.

To begin with, the world made a wrong assessment or was led toward that end. They thought that it was only a territorial dispute between the two neighbors, and it could be resolved by partitioning the area between the two. But, unfortunately, it is neither a territorial dispute nor a division of property. Basically it is a human problem, and it is a question of 5-million people and their aspirations, and, therefore, a human problem in which the destiny of millions is involved. Their long struggle for freedom for regaining their lost personality and the innumerable hardships they have gone through, all this background was completely ignored. This approach to the problem, in my opinion, has led to a stalemate. India wants the dispute to be resolved, which will suit her national interests, and Pakistan does the same. The other big powers want this dispute to be resolved, which will suit their individual national interests. To our bad luck, these interests are not identical. None considers this problem from the State people's angle as to how the poor 5-million people could be relieved from the innumerable hardships they have been facing for the last more than two decades, for no fault of theirs.

### *A Strange Phenomenon*

We have been witnessing a strange phenomenon around us. Take for instance the present Arab-Israeli conflict. America wants peace in the area. So does the U.S.S.R., another super power. But, both want peace which will suit their national interests, and not just the interests of the people of the region. Otherwise, if both superpowers give first priority to peace in

this region, is it possible for a tiny state like Israel or, for that matter, the Arab countries to continue the conflict? The same is happening in Indo-China and other troubles spots in the world. The powers that are involved do not give priority to peace in the region, but to their national interests.

### *Peace Based on Justice and Truth*

Peace should be based on justice and truth, and the party to the conflict, who does not yield to justice and truth, should not claim support from any country which is really wedded to peace, and that does not happen. Therefore, there is no end to world conflicts. We should not take the poses of peace displayed in the world today at face value. Peace can be achieved only on the basis of justice and truth. If every country sticks to these two fundamental objectives, all conflicts could be easily resolved.

### *We Can't Forget Our Problem*

The Kashmir could not be resolved for the last 22 years, because every country looked at the dispute through her own glasses, and, we, the real sufferers, keep quiet as mere onlookers, pinning our hopes on the combined wisdom of the UNO, or the joint efforts of India and Pakistan. The result is our continued suffering. Now the problem remains unresolved. I know there are good people in India who feel that some honorable solution must be found to the problem, and they also put in their efforts to achieve such a solution. But, when they fail in their attempt as the governments concerned do not accept their proposals, they give up their effort and forget all about it. But, this is, basically, our problem, and we cannot forget about it.

### *Realistic Solution*

This question is staring us in the face, because, without resolving it, the suffering we undergo cannot make us remain quiet. Therefore, we thought of sitting together and trying to find a solution that will give peace not only to our State but will also ensure peace in the subcontinent.

Now, people have got different solutions in their minds, which each of them thinks is the right solution. We felt that the best way would be to put

in a joint effort and try to convince others that the solution which we have in mind was the best solution which will contribute to the objective we have in mind—that of achieving peace. This, in fact, was the reason that gave birth to this Convention. Now, this is the 2nd session, and we are meeting after a long gap of two years. You can ask as to why it took such a long time to convene the 2nd session. This is not an easy matter. The problem, with which is linked not only the future of 5-million people of the State but also that of India and Pakistan, and the people of the whole of South and Middle East regions, is not so small a problem to be dealt with. We have to take every step after due deliberation. And then, you had entrusted some matters to the Steering Committee. All this took some time to deliberate upon. We had to tabulate the papers read at the first Convention, and we also had to deliberate upon some matters that arose out of the Resolution, which was unanimously passed by the first Convention.

According to this Resolution, it was unanimously agreed that a solution to the problem should be such as will keep in view the interests of all regions of the State. The State is not a homogenous one. It is a combination of different areas having different cultures and speaking different languages, viz., Kashmir, Jammu, Ladakh, Gilgit, Mirpur, Poonch, and so on. The Steering Committee entrusted this work to a sub-committee which broadly defined these areas.

### *Remove Mutual Suspicions*

The second point which the Steering Committee had to deal with was how to remove mutual suspicions of one region dominating the other. We felt that, generally, people felt that government patronage is mostly enjoyed by those who live near the seat of government, whether that be of securing employment loans or other civic amenities, and the people living further away from the seat of government, generally, are deprived of such benefits. They, also, do not have the same feeling of belonging as those who enjoyed such benefits. In order to give the feeling of belonging and equal participation in the affairs of the governance of the State, it was necessary to frame broad outlines of the internal structure of the State that would ensure maximum devolution of power up to the *Panchayat* level. The Steering Committee entrusted this work also to the sub-committee which considered this matter and prepared an outline on broad principles of the internal constitutional units for the State. The sub-committee has

suggested a five tier Constitution: (a) State; (b) Unit; (c) Zone; (d) Block; (e) *Panchayat*. It also suggested reinforcing the federal-type of government with the Center retaining only that much power as was necessary to maintain the integrity of the State, and the rest divided amongst the various Units. All this is contained in a booklet, which has been supplied to you.

### *Necessity of Internal Constitution*

Some friends objected that the Steering Committee has gone beyond its brief, and it had no right to prepare a draft future Constitution of the State. This is not an attempt to draft a Constitution, but just to make known our angle on the future internal set-up of the State with a view to removing mutual suspicions. The Steering Committee felt that unless we declare our intentions and try to remove mutual suspicions of domination, it would be very difficult to make all the people of the State belonging to different regions feel that the State was their homeland and their rights were completely safe, and in whose governance they are equal partners; that everyone of the State, irrespective of his/her caste, creed, color, or residence, develop such a feeling so that he/she is able to shed the fear complex that he/she will be dominated by the people of another region, and he/she will be able to consider the future status of his/her homeland in the most rational and realistic manner. If we succeed in removing this fear complex from the minds of the people belonging to different regions, it is hoped that the people of Jammu and the people of Kashmir will consider this question in a realistic and rational manner. These were then the problems that the Steering Committee had to consider, and it has concluded the assigned task, which has enabled it to convene the second session of the Convention.

### *Importance of Guidelines*

When you attended as delegates the first Convention, and some of you read your papers, you had no guidelines before you. We had only drawn your attention to the problem and requested you to present to the Convention any solution which you considered best for the resolution of the dispute. You gave vent to your feelings freely, but without any guidelines from us. In the first Resolution that you unanimously approved, you decided that the solution for the political future of the State should be

realistic and just, and should also keep in view the interests of the different regions of the State. The Steering Committee in its Resolution of December 21, 1970, passed in Jammu, added two more guidelines; viz., that it should also promote the feelings of communal harmony, strengthen secular and democratic forces not only within the State but also in the subcontinent. A solution that does not help in promoting communal harmony, but, on the other hand, causes communal ill-will, not only for us but for India and Pakistan as well, cannot be an ideal solution. We are professing different religions, but live as neighbors. We can prosper only if we go hand in hand together. Therefore, if a solution of the problem does not contribute toward creating feelings of harmony and brotherliness, it will not be a correct solution. The solution should also strengthen secular and democratic forces not only in the State but in India and Pakistan as well.

### *Call for Amity*

By secular and democratic forces, we mean forces which do not believe in communal predominance and oppression. The attitude that this country should be ruled only by Hindus or Muslims must be countered, or the other way will not yield any solution at all. Hindus or Muslims cannot destroy each other. Unfortunately, those people who are attempting such a solution in India are not doing any good to the country. They are harming it. India will not attain strength by such means. Such a policy, if persisted in, will cause great harm to the country. Millions of Indians have this realization. They feel that if this policy of Muslim baiting is not stopped, the whole of India will suffer. Therefore, we feel that whatever solution you may propose before the Convention, it should strengthen faith in communal harmony and brotherliness. Such healthy forces are present in both India and Pakistan and in the State as well. We must strengthen their hands. We should not, by our conduct and utterances, help those forces which believe in the cult of wanton violence as happened in Maharashtra and Gujarat. We should weaken such forces, not by violence but by argument and by creating public opinion against such methods.

These steps were within the guidelines, which you had yourselves adopted in the first Convention and to which we drew your pointed attention and requested you to prepare your paper and suggest a solution in a concise and concrete manner strictly conforming to those guidelines. I am very happy that we have received a good response from you, and we have



received in all 62 proposals both in English and Urdu, including those received from the other side of the cease-fire line as well as from the State nationals living in the U. K.

### *Kashmir Out of Bound for Kashmiris*

We had issued invitations to about 150 of our State nationals living in Azad Kashmir, Pakistan, and the U. K. to attend the Convention and had requested both the President of Pakistan and Prime Minister of India to facilitate the delegates for attending the Convention. Unfortunately, however, the Prime Minister of India refused to allow visas to our invitees. She wrote to me in reply to my letter that I had made a similar request when the first Convention was held and that request was not granted. Now since we had not advanced any new argument in support of the fresh request, the Government of India did not see any reason for altering its previous attitude. I wrote in reply that the matter was very simple, and it did not require any arguments in support of it. India herself has always considered the State as a single unit and claims that Pakistan is in illegal possession of a part of Jammu and Kashmir territory. The world also has not accepted the division of the State. The so-called State Constitution has also left 25 seats to be filled by State nationals living in Azad Kashmir or Pakistan. The cease-fire line was a temporary measure to stop Indian and Pakistani forces from cutting each other's throats. It was never meant to stop the movement of the State nationals. Unfortunately, this cease-fire line is now used for preventing people living on either side from meeting each other. As far as the units of the two armies stationed on the cease-fire line are concerned, their movements in each other's territory are not as strictly restricted. It is commonly known that they even enjoy each other's hospitality. But the unfortunate national of the State, if he/she dares to cross the cease-fire line is liable to be shot. I urged on the Prime Minister to reconsider the matter and allow the invitees from Azad Kashmir and the U. K. to participate in the deliberations at the Convention, and that their movements may be kept under watch if considered necessary. But I did not get any reply, and official quarters indicated that no reply was needed. I sent a telegram drawing the attention of the Prime Minister to my request as the Convention dates were nearing, but still there was no reply. Pakistan, on the other hand, did not refuse permission. The Pakistan High Commissioner verbally conveyed to me the message from President Yahya Khan which said that Pakistan will not raise any objection provided India

issues visas to those invited to attend the Convention. Our friends in the U. K. approached the Indian High Commissioner placed in London for the issuance of visas to them. We are informed that he was very courteous to them and said that, personally, he had no objection, but since the matter was political, he had to get instructions from the Government of India and that they should wait. After some time, he told them that the Government of India was not prepared to issue visas to any Kashmiri national living in the U. K. for attending the Convention. Anyone with a British passport could, however, visit India but could not go to Kashmir between the 7th and the 16th of June, dates on which the convention was to be held.

### *We Want to Deliberate Together to Find a Solution*

Thus the India Government does not permit us even to think together for the resolution of our problems. It is not that we intend to organize an army of revolt against India as the people of Nagaland are doing. We only wanted to deliberate upon our future and to find out ways and means to extricate ourselves peacefully from the mire we have fallen into, with the cooperation and goodwill of India and Pakistan—not treating either of them as our enemy. But even this is not permitted to us. This is sheer lack of commonsense, and nothing good can come out of such an attitude. Our objective is so clear that no force can suppress it. Truth can never be suppressed; it may be for some time, but ultimately it will prevail. We believe that our demand is just and rational, and we shall achieve it. No power and no force can prevail upon us to give up our basic objective. It is the duty of every patriot, and whether he belongs to India or Pakistan, he should try and find out a satisfactory solution to any problem so that we see an end to this long-standing dispute, which has embittered Indo-Pak relations and led to two dreadful wars in which there was great loss in men and materials and continues to inflict misery on the people.

### *A Word to the Press*

Press representatives, when they are typing their dispatches about the Convention, should realize that their words will reach and influence world opinion. So, if they write their dispatches objectively without injecting their personal attitude, it is bound to have a better effect. On the other hand, if they do otherwise, it will not have that good effect, and in such a

case they will also be co-sufferers with us, because this is a common problem for us all. Not only the destiny of 5-million people of the State is involved, but also the destiny of India and Pakistan to a large extent in the resolving of this dispute, which is a human problem and not a territorial one. I request the Press to report objectively the proceedings of the Convention. You are our brethren, and we request your cooperation. I also draw attention of the Press Gallery to the reporting of the Press Conference that I held a yesterday. The Conference was called to apprise the representatives of the Press about the arrangements made for the convening of the Convention and all the questions related to that subject. But some papers had forgotten to report what was said in the Press Conference, except two or three points.

### *Religion and the Two-Nation Theory*

I had stated that religion has nothing to do with politics. I never believed in the two-nation theory. I wanted a solution that would not weaken the basis of secularism in India. All these points raised a controversy in the country. This I do not consider an honest and objective reporting. Such reporting does more harm than good to the country. Now, for instance, with regard to religion or politics, as a Muslim, I believe that the definition of a true religion is one which fulfills the two-fold obligations: (i) obligations to his Creator, and (ii) obligations toward his creation. You cannot, therefore, isolate religion from your daily life at any stage whatsoever. What I really meant was that if a person professes Hinduism and does a wrong act, that act should not be attributed to his religion. He is a human being and as such he has committed a wrongful act. His religion has nothing to do with it. Similarly, with regard to a person who professes Islam as his religion. No religion preaches cruelty to God's creation by word or deed. It was in this context that I stated that religion has nothing to do with politics.

Again, when I stated that we do not believe in the two-nation theory, I was explaining why we extended our hand of friendship toward India in 1947. We did not do so because India was a big country or a rich country and we were to share her riches, but we, honestly, felt that we were all human beings, and, therefore, we are all equal. Only those who fear God more can claim precedence over others, as also those who fulfill their obligations toward God and His creation. Greatness does not lie in the achievement of riches or in professing a certain religion, but greatness lies

in the fulfillment of human obligations. We, therefore, did not approve the actions of those who perpetrated atrocities on their fellow-beings in the name of religion, whether Muslim, Hindu, or Sikh, as had, unfortunately, happened in 1947, or as is happening now in many parts of India. We consider all human beings as our brethren; the Holy Quran teaches us the same. We joined hands with India in 1947, because the voice, though very feeble, dinned in our ears every day calling us all back to the path of sanity, human fellowship, and brotherhood, and we believed that this voice alone will take the country forward. Above all, Mahatma Gandhi had given a new angle to politics. He had emphasized the right means for achieving a right objective. He had based politics on morality, and this was exactly the message of the Great Prophet of Islam. He told us that all actions and thoughts, whether open or secret, are known to God, and he laid the greatest stress on adherence to moral principles. Gandhiji repeated the same language. He did not present any new theory. He, on the other hand, admitted that whatever he had learned, it was from the lives of such great prophets like Mohammad and Jesus (Peace Be Upon Them) and their followers like Umar, the great second Khalif of Islam.

### *Our Community of Ideas*

This was then the community of ideas, which attracted us to India. We thought that the future shape of India would be based on such high moral principles as enunciated, taught, and practiced by the country's greatest leader and Father of the Nation, Mahatma Gandhi. Some friends accused me that it was I who was responsible for taking Kashmir to India and to the unending troubles that followed that action. I have never denied this, but, unfortunately, those friends conveniently forgot all those conditions with which this action was linked up. I had no power to bind 5-million people with a decision which would seal not only their destiny but the destinies of their future generations as well. Therefore, we had entered into a provisional agreement, fully protecting the inherent basic right of 5-million people of the State to pronounce their verdict on the issue of the future relationship of their State with either India or Pakistan in a free Plebiscite to be held under the auspices of UN Organization, without any pressure from within or without, when law and order were fully restored in the State. All the records of the UN, the Parliament of India, and the archives of India and Pakistan are there to testify to what I had stated.

Despite all these, there are people who repeat the charge against me day in and day out.

I request the Press to keep the basic objective of the Convention in mind and to try to highlight it. Sometimes, a remark may come from a delegate which does not fully conform to the basic objective of the Convention. This should not be highlighted and taken advantage of in order to kill the basic objective of the Convention. This will not help anybody. Therefore, what is needed is cooperation from all. Then alone, we may be able to find a solution to this tangles problem. We should stop creating confusion in the minds of people as we have been guilty of doing for the last 22 years. It is not the people of Kashmir alone who suffered, the people of India and Pakistan have not suffered less. We are determined to achieve our objective, and I feel that we are marching forward.

I thank all the delegates for taking the trouble to attend the Convention, and I stress upon you the need for evolving a solution which will give peace not only to the State but to the entire Subcontinent. Please remember that our freedom movement did not start from 1931, but it began with the conquest of Kashmir by the Mughal armies.

### *Centuries Old Freedom Struggle*

The last independent reigning king of Kashmir surrendered to Emperor Akbar after resisting and defeating his forces several times. Even today one sees the vast graveyards, still called the *Mughal Maidan*, of Mughal soldiers in Kishtawar, where the Mughal armies had to face the last pitched battle of Kashmiris for their freedom and survival. Since that unfortunate day, Kashmiris have suffered innumerable injustices and hardships at the hands of their foreign conquerors, each one of whom spared no attempt to cripple the freedom spirits of Kashmiris. Ever and again, the people revolted against these injustices even before 1931. One does come across the attempts of Kashmiris, though feeble, for redeeming themselves and getting their grievances redressed, and accepted sufferings willingly in consequence thereof. The exile of Khwaja Saaduddin Shawl and Khwaja Noor Shah Naqshbandi from Kashmir and the confiscation of their *jagir* is very well known. The mass movement of 1931 was the continuation of the same struggle with the same aims and objectives for redeeming our lost personality. We claim that one man cannot be the master of the destiny of millions without their consent.

### *Our stand vis-à-vis Pakistan*

Our difference with the leaders of Pakistan in 1947 was only on this point. We wanted that they should concede to us this fundamental right of deciding our own political future. We had not made our choice either way. We only asserted that whatever the decision about the future affiliations of our State, it would be made by the people of the State themselves, professing different faiths and religions. As Muslims, we had the realization that we were tied to the people of Pakistan by so many common bonds and possibly those bonds might influence the opinion of the vast section of the State's population in favor of Pakistan, but this decision must be made by the people themselves freely without pressures from within or from without. We made it clear that the people of Kashmir will never surrender this basic right of theirs to anyone else, and we had taken a vow before god and our conscience, when we joined this freedom struggle in 1931, that henceforth no one can treat us as dumb-driven cattle and impose his will on us. The only decision that will be acceptable to the people of Kashmir will be made by her own nationals—whether Hindus, Muslims, or Sikhs. A single Parsee family that has chosen this land as its homeland has as much right to participate in making this vital decision as the Muslims who constitute the overwhelming majority of the land. The leaders of Pakistan did not accept this position, but claimed the possession of the State on the basis of religion and asserted that the decision had already been taken to partition the country on the basis of religion. We said that the principle of partition did not apply to Kashmir or other Indian states.

### *Understanding with India*

India, on the other hand, gave support to these principles and helped us morally and materially to defend our cherished right. Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru, the then Prime Minister and unquestioned leader of India, fully understood our heartbeats and carried our views to the four corners of the world and declared in unequivocal terms that Kashmir was not a piece of property to be divided between India and Pakistan, but Kashmiris have had a long tradition of freedom struggle, hopes, and aspirations behind them for their future, which no one should ignore but, in fact, should respect. He had further declared, innumerable times in the Parliament, press conferences, in his public speeches, and before the U. N. through his representative, that India had no territorial ambitions in Kashmir. He only

wanted that the people of the State should be given complete freedom to decide their own political future freely and without any pressures. He had also declared that ‘the issue in Kashmir is whether violence and naked force should decide the future or will of the people.’

It was to protect this inherent right of the people of Kashmir that India had agreed to dispatch military help to the army of the State to defend themselves.

Unfortunately, however, India has changed her stand today, and we are, every now and then, being threatened on the strength of the same Indian army—which once entered our territory as defenders of our freedom and for the protection of our inherent right of self-determination—that if we continue to assert our right, dire consequences will follow. World history, however, tells us that once a nation is determined to liberate itself, no amount of force has succeeded in suppressing it. India can rule our bodies, but can never win our hearts.

You have come here to deliberate upon this delicate problem, and you must clearly understand that only those of you can provide clear guidance to the nation who have not mortgaged their thinking to Pakistan or India, USSR or America, but who think only for Kashmir as their homeland. As I have stated before, our struggle is the continuation of the same old struggle that started the day Kashmir lost freedom at the hands of Mughals. Our fight is not against India, or Pakistan, or their people for that matter, but for the principle of self-determination.

### *Secularism Defined*

Having listened to the debate on the concept of ‘secularism,’ it is clear that there is no basic difference in the viewpoints expressed. Secularism means that all people have equal right irrespective of their faith and religious persuasions, and that everybody should respect the other’s feelings. Secularism does not mean the protecting of one’s co-religionists alone. Unfortunately, however, there are people and organizations in India that claim to be secular and, yet, misuse the very concept and word and all that it stands for. It is because of their actions that the word has lost its true purport and significance, and those who suffer all sorts of indignities and injustices at the hands of so-called secularists have lost faith in such slogans. The fault does not, however, lie in the word, but in our actions.

The dreadful spectacle of communal riots and mass murders recently witnessed in Gujarat, Maharashtra, and some other States of India has led

them to believe that the slogan of secularism is used by various political parties as merely a cover, the heart basically remaining communal. I do understand the feelings of Qari sahib when he suggested that we not use the word 'secularism' in the Resolution as, according to him, it would create doubts in a section of the people. On the other hand, there are friends who feel that if this word is removed from the Resolution, the entire basis on which the political structure of India is built will be completely knocked out.

We are not sticklers for words; we pursue realities. The people of Kashmir never trumpeted the word 'secularism,' but the world has witnessed how, despite the gravest provocations, every now and then, the Muslims of the State, who form an overwhelming majority, never indulged in communal hatred and killings of minorities.

Attempts were and are being made, from time to time, by vested interests to poison this atmosphere of brotherhood and human fellowship, but the majority community never reacted to such provocations. The behavior of the Muslims of the Valley, as shown during the days of the disappearance of the Holy Relic, or during the Kashmiri Pandits' agitation, and other such similar occasions, has conclusively proved that the maintenance of communal peace and human fellowship is an Article of Faith with the majority community of this State.

The apprehensions and fears expressed in Mr. Ali Shah's paper with regard to the future of Muslims in India cannot be denied by anyone. The unfortunate happenings there have not affected him or me alone, but they have also affected the large majority of the people living in India, who, undoubtedly, include even Hindus.

### *Objective Angle on Communalism*

If we believe that in India every Hindu thinks in the same way as is being done by those who may indulge if the orgy of communal frenzy, loot, arson, and murder in Maharashtra, Gujarat, or other parts of India, then what is the way out? But, I am sure this is not the true picture prevailing in India. There are hundreds and thousands of Hindus living in different parts of India who feel as equally concerned and ashamed of such acts of violence and openly express regret for that. But the trouble is they are afraid of coming in the open and taking up cudgels against those responsible for such acts. Fear complex has gripped them. Our efforts should be to bring them into the field and persuade them to counter such acts with



determination and courage. We cannot achieve anything by running away from the field and leave it open for people like Mr. Madhok, Vajpayee, Golwalkar, or others of their way of thinking to exterminate 60 million Muslims living in India, only because they profess a religion different from theirs. No patriotic and conscientious Indian would allow the cold blooded murder of men, women, and children, both young and old, only because they happen to profess a different religion, and leave the field quietly open for such elements. No, our duty is to go into the field as brave soldiers to uphold the interests and protect the cause of human brotherhood and counter such bestial actions. If the Prime Minister of India has given a call to end this ugly situation, we should join hands with her for keeping up the dignity and fellowship for humankind. Either you surrender to such brutal and uncivilized forces and get killed in consequence thereof, or you fight them out; and even if you get killed, there is a vast difference in the two ways of dying—the first is the death of a coward, and the second the death of a martyr in upholding the cause of a sublime principle.

While appreciating the sentiments of my friend, Mr. Ali Shah, I only ask: if his argument that the salvation of the state lies only in joining Pakistan is accepted, what will be the net result? Muslims will vote en bloc for Pakistan and non-Muslims for India. The Convention has unanimously decided against partitioning the State, and then the composition of the population of the State is intermixed. We have no isolated pockets of different communities, so that they can be walled off. Look at Jammu: despite the large migration of the population across the cease fire line during 1947, Muslims living in Jammu province still constitute 46 percent of its total population, and they are spread all over the province, in areas such as Kathua, Basoli, Reasi, Doda, Poonch, etc. It is not, therefore, practical politics to suggest the partition of the State on communal basis even if one may believe in the principle of the two-nation theory.

Kashmir is the homeland of us all, whether Hindus, Muslims, Sikhs, or Buddhists. We have no quarrel with India or Pakistan, whom we consider our two great neighbors. We have no quarrel with any other country of the world either. But we are merely deliberating as to how we can develop our homeland and achieve a place of honor and freedom in the world. We can only achieve our objective if we learn to trust each other and do not like to do unto others which we do not like to be done unto us. Mr. Ali Shah feels that his salvation lies in acceding to Pakistan. He must be prepared to concede the same right to his Hindu neighbor if he believes his salvation lies in acceding to India. What will the result be? A stalemate, the

baneful consequence of which every individual living in this State, I am sure, must have, by now, fully realized.

We have drawn your attention to the realities of the situation. If we continue to be overwhelmed by our sentiments alone, it is not possible to find a solution to the problem that will be in conformity with the guidelines proposed by the Convention. It is because of such considerations that we had requested you to keep in view the guidelines proposed by the Convention. I am not afraid of criticism, nor do I resent it; one has to be prepared for both praise as well as harsh words. My only desire is that whatever solution you may ultimately propose, that should be yours and yours alone. It should not be imposed upon you by anyone else. I may declare here and now that if 5 million people of the State decide that they can safeguard their honor in hell, I shall be the first man to join them because my place is with them and none else.

### *Implementing the Objectives*

Replying to the point that if the Convention arrives at a consensus with regard to the future affiliation of the State, how was that going to be implemented, and that if we could not succeed in a small matter like getting visas for a few of our friends across the cease-fire line to attend the Convention, how could we achieve this big objective? In my opinion, we must fix our objective, on the righteousness of which we must have full confidence and conviction. The second step would be to consider the ways and means of achieving that objective. We should not think that whatever little effort we have made or are making in search of a solution to the problem is not going to have any effect either on the Government of India or Pakistan. It does! It is for the first time after 22 years that the people of the State have taken the initiative in their own hands and are eagerly searching for a peaceful and democratic solution to the problem. Till now, we had remained as mere onlookers and handed over our problem to India or Pakistan, or in the hands of other countries.

World history tells us that in every country the struggle for freedom has seen ups and downs, successes and failures. But ultimately it achieved success. The case of the Indian struggle for freedom is before us, and for that matter, the struggle for freedom in Algeria against the mighty power of the French, who had established themselves there firmly for the last 80 years and where more than a million Frenchmen had settled as big landlords and industrialists. But, when the people of Algeria made up their

minds to throw off the French yoke at any cost, the might power of France had to surrender before the will of the people. In our State, we have yet to fix our goal, and then the consideration of ways and means of its achievement will follow. Some friends wrongly say that the objective of self-determination was that the Muslims of the State would link their fate with Pakistan. We should never forget that God has given birth to us in a land where besides Muslims there live side by side the people of other faiths as well—Hindus, Sikhs, Buddhists, and Parsees, etc. We live in a country of mixed population. Therefore, it becomes incumbent on us not to think of one section of the population alone. Undoubtedly, the Muslims in the State are very much concerned about their future because of what is happening in India today or what treatment they received from the Government of India. Nonetheless, while considering the ultimate solution for the political future of the State, they must adopt an attitude which would not create the same feelings of anxiety and fear in the hearts and minds of their neighbors. It is, therefore, their duty, as a majority community, not to think of their own safety, honor, and freedom alone, but to work equally for the safety, freedom, and honor of their neighbors. If even one non-Muslim feels unsafe, it will indicate the weakness of the majority community. It is not only for the majority community to approve the solution, but the minority community should also feel that such a solution will bring peace, security, and honor to them as well.

### *Path of Positive Thinking*

We have to deliberate upon this problem with this attitude of mind. If we do so, I am sure, positive results will follow; otherwise, it will merely constitute an exercise in futility. The majority community here is not only to function in this manner, but has also to give a lesson to the majority community in India or Pakistan as to how they should behave with their minorities and how to protect their lives, honor, and freedom. The atmosphere of communal harmony that you, as a majority community here, have maintained despite terrible provocation, did not go without effect on the people of India or Pakistan. I feel that the entire world is full of praise for it. In this regard, you have only followed what God and His Prophet had ordained to you.

A friend, while referring to the recent incident in Srinagar Engineering College, had said that a Muslim student was killed there and that showed the helplessness of the majority community here. Did that friend desire

that the majority should have taken revenge upon innocent boys—boys belonging to the minority community—and thus establish their numerical superiority. Of course, if the majority community had behaved like that, perhaps, students of the community would have suffered greatly, but that would have brought great shame not only upon the majority community here but also upon the religion they claim to profess—Islam, the religion of peace. You should have met some of the Hindu and Sikh boys who had suffered grievous hurts in the scuffle and were lying in the hospital along with the Muslim boy, who was struggling for his life. I am sure you would have felt no difference in extending your sympathies to all of them alike. I saw them myself. None of them could tell me how it had all happened. A father should not only love his own child; he should treat all children as his own, irrespective of religious faith. That way lies peace, and that way one can serve humanity. No doubt, the Muslim boy could not survive, and every one of us felt a grievous pain, but the way we bore this suffering with patience and fortitude for the entire community not only the respect of others by this behavior but we also served Islam, our great religion, and demonstrated in a practical manner to the world what essentially Islam teaches us. We are considering our problems from a very high moral level. We should, in no case, lose that perspective. To the Muslim delegates, my only request would be to follow strictly the tenets of God and His Prophet, the Quran, and the sayings of the Prophet, and implicitly follow them, not their own emotions. We must realize what our duties, as a majority community, are toward minorities. In India, unfortunately, the majority community has failed to realize its obligations toward minorities. The world has witnessed the dreadful happenings over there, and, most distressingly, it has not earned a good name for India.

### *All Eyes Watching*

All justice-loving people have condemned such actions. Do you think that the ambassadors of Muslim countries placed in India do not have knowledge of these happenings, or they present bouquets to the External Affairs Ministry for such doings? Undoubtedly, it is not so. All of them do feel as much concerned not only as fellow Muslims but also as human beings concerned with the fate of the Muslim minority in India, and they lose faith in the effectiveness of the country's administration. It is because of the fact that the Hindu majority community in India has not yet fully realized its obligations toward minorities that has brought down India's name

in the world to a very low level. I have no doubt in my mind that India's progress will be greatly hindered unless the majority community by its behavior does not assure minorities that their honor, liberty, and rights will be fully protected, and if anyone dare play with their rights as equal citizens of India, the entire minority community will rise as one man against it. What I wish the attitude of the majority in India should be applies equally to the majority community here in this State. By protecting the honor of their minorities, they will be protecting their own honor. It was this noble behavior of the majority community of this State in 1947, and after that has earned for them the respect of everyone, and provided a lesson to the majority community in India as well.

### *An Example for All*

I remember the turbulent days of 1947 when the Maharaja had completed secret arrangements to run away from the capital along with his relations and movable assets. He had sent a truck to a village in Kulgam Tehsil where a few families of Hindu Dogra *jagirdars* belonging to his clan had been settled long ago, advising them to leave the place and accompany him to Jammu. When this news reached us, we sent some of our workers and persuaded them not to leave their hearths and homes in fear. Their own tenants, with whom their own behavior had always remained overbearing and lordly, also came out of their hutments along with their families and pleaded with these *jagirdars* not to mistrust them and run away from their homes. All the Muslims assured them that they will stand guarantee for their safety and honor and will even sacrifice their lives in order to protect them from any kind of molestation. The truck was returned empty, and even today, anyone can visit the village and verify this fact.

This, then, should be the exemplary and humane behavior of the majority toward its minorities. As Muslims you have learned to adopt this behavior from your religion and so long as you continue to stick to it, I am sure, you will never be losers. Trials and tribulations are the necessary concomitants for the achievement of ideals. Even the prophet had to go through many ordeals. I am sure that God is preparing you for a bigger task and greater responsibilities. There is no reason for feeling any disappointment. But, you shall always have to keep in view, in word and deed, how to behave toward minorities. The word of the mouth is sometimes sharper than the sword. Therefore, we have to use our words after due deliberation. A person belonging to a minority community may sometimes use

harsh words or even abuse, but the older brother [sister] should be large-hearted enough not only to tolerate and condone it but instead embrace him and [her] and assure him [her] that he has nothing but good at heart.

It is very necessary for every one of us to keep our emotions under control. I do not praise myself, but don't you know what I have had to face in the past 12 years in jail and what my other colleagues had to suffer, and how we all spent those years behind prison bars. The condition of my colleagues and me was miserable. But, we suffered those hardships with patience and did not allow the feelings of revenge and hatred to take hold of us. When Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru released us and invited me to Delhi, I did not reject the invitation. He whose actions are dedicated does not entertain any feelings of hatred even toward his oppressors. On the other hand, he feels a sense of satisfaction in himself and patiently accepts the hardships. His sacrifices lose value if he loses patience and gives vent to his sufferings. True, it is a very high ideal. My only prayer is that God gives us all the strength to follow it.

[Mr. Ved Bhasin, one of the delegates of the Convention from Jammu, read his paper in which he freely leveled charges of betrayal and volte-face on the part of the Kashmir leadership, who, according to him, made a definite commitment to the accession of the State to the Indian Union and were now backing out. He had also asserted that India had made no promise of a plebiscite and that the accession was final and irrevocable. He also claimed that many progressive countries of the world had given up plebiscite as a method for the exercise of self-determination.]

Basically, assertions and claims of Mr. Bhasin and, for that matter, even of myself, have no value unless they are supported by records. We must find out from the records what stand India had taken at the time when the dispute over accession of Kashmir first arose.

### *Relevant Documents Speak*

In a democratic system, it is the Parliament which represents the country, and the Prime Minister is the spokesperson of the Parliament and, therefore, that of the country. One can easily find out from the various White Papers presented to the Parliament by the Government on the stand which it had taken with regard to the Kashmir dispute. These are essential documents, and nobody can doubt their authenticity. Perhaps, Mr. Bhasin has never bothered to look into them. Otherwise, he would not have made those assertions.

There are innumerable commitments of Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru and his Government that disprove to the assertions made by Mr. Bhasin.

In her complaint before the Security Council, India had stated:

But to avoid any suggestion that India had utilized the State's immediate peril for her own political advantage, the Government of India made it clear that once the State had been cleared of the invader and normal conditions restored, its people would be free to decide their future by the recognized democratic method of a plebiscite or referendum which, in order to ensure complete impartiality, could be held under international auspices.

This was then the stand of India when she presented her case on Kashmir to the United Nations. Today, if hundreds of such people try to assert that there was no commitment on behalf of India with regard to the holding of plebiscite, would the world believe them? Unfortunately, our friend is doing more harm to India than good in championing what India herself dare not.

Mr. Bhasin has charged the Kashmir leadership with betrayal and volte-face. He should understand that Sheikh Abdullah had no right to commit 5 million people of this State to a particular course without their consent. If there was any commitment made by him, it was only on his own behalf and on behalf of his organization, which he represents. He could not barter away the destinies of the entire people. I have repeatedly said that, as Muslims, we had many links with Pakistan and her people, but that did not deflect me, and I did not agree to do something for which I had no opportunity of obtaining the concurrence of the people.

I told the representatives of Pakistan who visited Kashmir in 1947 that I shall not feel sorry if the people of Kashmir decided to join Pakistan, but it must be their own decision and not imposed on them. Before taking such a vital decision, we shall have to examine carefully the terms of accession. The basic objective of our freedom movement, I further told them, was to be masters of our own destiny and no-longer to be treated as dumb-driven cattle. Unfortunately, they did not understand our heart beats. Perhaps, they thought us to be too docile and weak for claiming such a position.

On the contrary, India supported our stand. Pandit Jawaharlal not only looked at our freedom struggle with sympathy and understanding, but actively supported it, carrying our voice around the four corners of the

world and also into the United Nations. Thus was laid bare the basis of our mutual friendship and understanding.

As Secretary to the States Ministry, Shri V. P. Menon played an important role in negotiating the accession of different States to India. He has recorded the history of the integration of States with the Indian Union in two volumes. Kashmir also figures in them. This record is much more authentic than the claims made by our friend, Mr. Bhasin. This is what Shri Menon states on pages 399 and 400 of his book, *Integration of States*:

He Lord (Mountbatten) further expressed the strong opinion that, in view of the composition of the population, accession should be conditional on the will of the people being ascertained by a plebiscite, after the raiders had been driven out of the State and law and order had been restored.

With the Instrument of Accession and the Maharaja's letter, I flew back at once to Delhi. Sardar was waiting at the aerodrome, and we both went straight to a meeting of the Defense Committee, which was arranged for that evening. There was a long discussion, at the end of which it was decided that the accession of Jammu and Kashmir should be accepted subject to the proviso that a plebiscite would be held in the State when the law and order situation allowed. ... This decision had the fullest support of Sheikh Abdullah.

I am accused of having gone back on my commitments to India, a charge which I have repeatedly denied. On this matter, I am prepared to abide by the decision of the International Court or any panel of impartial judges. No purpose will be served by deliberately creating confusion in the mind of the people. Neither has it paid in the past, nor will it pay in the future. Our case is so clear and incontrovertible that there is no country in the world which supports the claim of India that Kashmir has become an integral part of it.

### *Test of Faith*

The fundamental aim of our freedom struggle had always been the achievement of self-determination, which the leadership of India always supported. We are determined to continue our fight till we achieve the objective despite India's opposition to it now. No threats will make us surrender this right to anyone, and if, unfortunately, the Government of India refuses to give up her present stand, she may rule upon our bodies but will never win our hearts.



We believed in the oft-repeated declarations of the Indian leadership that India will be a secular democracy where rule of law shall always prevail, and every citizen be treated alike, making no discrimination on the basis of religion, caste, creed, or color. To our dismay, however, our experience has shown us that there is a vast gulf between their precept and performance.

### *Basic Conditions*

Our understanding with India was a two-way traffic. We had agreed to support the accession to India on three conditions (a) that the State will enjoy full internal autonomy on the basis of the Instrument of Accession; (b) that India will be a democratic and secular country where rule of law will always be supreme; and (c) that the people of the State will be asked to approve or reject the provisional accession through a plebiscite when law and order in the State was restored.

I need not refer here to the innumerable statements and declarations made in support of this by the then leaders of India like Mahatma Gandhi, Sardar Patel, and Jawaharlal Nehru.

In his broadcast to the nation on November 2, 1948—hardly a week after the Instrument of Accession was signed by the Maharaja—Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru as Prime Minister of India, among other things, had said:

We decided to accept this accession and to send troops by air, but we made a condition that the accession would have to be considered by the people of Kashmir later, when peace and order was established. We were anxious not to finalize anything in a moment of crisis and without the fullest opportunity to the people of Kashmir to have their say. It was for them ultimately to decide.

And here let me make it clear that it has been our policy all along that where there is a dispute about the accession of a State to either Dominion, the decision must be made by the people of the State. It was in accordance with this policy that we added a proviso to the Instrument of Accession of Kashmir.

We have declared that the fate of Kashmir is ultimately to be decided by the people. That pledge we have given and the Maharaja has supported it, not only to the people of Kashmir but to the world. We will not and cannot back out of it. We are prepared when peace, law, and order have been established to have a referendum held under international auspices like the

United Nations. We want it to be a fair and just reference to the people, and we shall accept their verdict. I can imagine no fairer and juster offer.

### *The Hour of Trial*

In 1947, the Maharaja ran away from his summer capital, Srinagar, accompanied by his Prime Minister, Mr. Meherchand Mahajan, into the safety of Jammu. Extreme danger loomed large all over the State. I was appointed the Head of the Administration. Immediately on taking the oath of office, I addressed the members of the Secretariat and other government officials in which I made it clear that the political future of the State shall be decided by the people themselves through a plebiscite, and that our only desire was that the people of the State may be given the fullest opportunity to express their opinion freely and without pressure from within or without, whether they wanted to link their future with Pakistan or India. I had made a supporting offer to the Head of Pakistan, Mr. Mohammad Ali Jinnah, that I shall be prepared to go to Karachi if I was invited, and assured him that the people of the State were not against Pakistan as such. They only wanted that their right to decide their future themselves should be recognized.

At the time of the declaration of the cease-fire, I made a broadcast from Jammu congratulating the people of the State on the recognition of their right of self-determination, and told them that it would now be for them to take a decision about their own political future through an impartial plebiscite when the law and order situation in the State was fully restored.

Unfortunately, all this record disappeared with the coup of 9th August, 1953. Even my private and personal papers were taken away. In fact, any published document or book which would not support the changed stand of India disappeared from the market. Thus, leaders of India thought that they had succeeded in wiping out the past historical record, which would throw a different light on their present stand. I and hundreds of my other colleagues were put behind bars for years without proving any charge against us and the voice of the people was suppressed by the wanton use of bullets. Does my friend Mr. Bhasin call this democracy and rule of law? At least we did not join hands with India on such basis. The repeated and dreadful spectacle of communal riots and the inefficiency and partisan attitude shown by the agencies responsible for maintaining peace and order in the country clearly demonstrated the hollowness of their claims. It was the India of Gandhiji's dreams that had attracted us to her and not the

philosophy of Shri Gowalkar, Madhok, and the organization that they represent.

### *Whose Volte Face?*

As a Muslim, I fully understand the importance of a pledge and would rather lose my life than go back on it. The betrayal, which Mr. Bhasin has talked about in his paper, took place on the part of those whose actions he has tried to justify. It was the leadership of India which encouraged the merger process and used every artifice to erode our autonomy. It gave tacit support to the activities of those people who were working for the complete merger of the State with India. Even Pandit Jawaharlal supported this policy but differed with their approach. This led to the parting of ways. My friendship and close association with Jawaharlal did not stand in my way where the interests of the people of the State were concerned.

The final break in our relations came in 1953 when Pandit Jawaharlal suggested that I should get the accession ratified by the Kashmir Constituent Assembly. This change in his attitude baffled me, for he had himself vehemently opposed it in the past. When Pakistan had raised this question in the Security Council, India had assured the world body that she had no intention of going back on her commitment of holding a plebiscite in Kashmir. I strongly advised him against such a step. This led to my removal from the Premiership of the State and long imprisonment without trial.

I must admit that I was wrong in placing my trust so completely on the solemn pledges given and agreements arrived at with the leadership of India. How could one believe that the very people who had all their lives fought for truth and freedom would themselves throw such high moral principles overboard and treat their pledges and agreements as mere scraps of paper? I realized that my trust was misplaced, but it was done in all honesty and not for any personal gain. Gandhiji's sole emphasis was on the right means for achieving the right end. But all this was forgotten. The most painful thing is that instead of admitting their mistakes, they try to justify them.

I have pointed out to you the mistakes of both India and Pakistan which their leadership committed with regard to the Kashmir dispute to enable you to make a correct appraisal of the situation facing us.

God is, perhaps, preparing you to shoulder a bigger task and greater responsibility. One achieves maturity only by undergoing trials and sufferings. None of us should nurse the feelings that since India and Pakistan

have taken opposite and rigid attitudes with regard to the Kashmir dispute, no equitable and fair solution was possible. Freedom does not come to any nation on a silver platter. It demands sacrifices. If you have the necessary will and determination, you are bound to achieve your goal, just as India achieved freedom from the British under the leadership of Mahatma Gandhi and the gallant people of Algeria from France. I have no doubt in my mind that the coming generation does not understand all this. Your sacrifices, however, must have some clear objective. Otherwise, they will go in vain.

I, again, assure my friend Shri Ved Bhasin and the people of his way of thinking that I have not changed. I continue to cherish the very same ideals for the achievement of which I have fought all my life. He should search for turncoats somewhere else. As a Muslim, I believe in the five Articles of Faith only. I am not like the one who declared loyalty to me as his sixth Article of Faith in order to use it as a cover for stabbing me in the back for achieving personal ends.

### *Basic Approach Defined*

The purpose of the Convention is how to reconcile the opposite stands of our two neighboring countries regarding the future of our State. Though many delegates have understood the purpose and have suggested proposals, which in their opinion, would achieve the objective, yet some friends have not understood it. They have repeated their old stands suggesting Plebiscite, accession to India, or accession to Pakistan as the only alternatives. There is nothing new in these proposals, which have been discussed and debated for the last two decades without achieving any positive result.

The Convention has to strike a balance and chart out a middle course. It will now be for members of the Steering Committee to study all the suggestions and find a common denominator, and prepare a solution which will not only be honorable or the 5 million people of this State but which millions living in India and Pakistan will also consider the best in the circumstances. Governments of the two countries may or may not support such a solution, for they have become prisoners of their own doings like the silk worm which weaves its own cocoon and gets imprisoned in it. Therefore, when I say that a solution must be acceptable to India and Pakistan, I have the people of those countries in mind. There can be only two ways of achieving the objective: (a) through struggle and (b) through

friendly negotiations. All this depends on prevailing conditions. That stage has not reached yet.

### *Internal Set-up Clarified*

The delegates who have raised a constitutional point against the presentation of these outlines but justified it on the ground that unless the people of the State belonging to different regions, speaking different languages, and professing different faiths are not assured of fullest participation in the affairs of the State and guaranteed autonomous status, their apprehensions against the domination of one region over the other will continue. This position will not give them a sense of belonging and equal participation, and they will not be able to think rationally on the political future of their homeland. Fear complex will influence their rational approach. The papers that some of the delegates presented to the Convention definitely point toward this aspect and therefore, they were not able to present a rational and balanced point of view to the Convention.

The Document "C" was an attempt to lay down the broad principles on which the future internal constitutional structure of the State should be based so that all inter-regional conflicts can be removed. It is not an attempt to write down the Constitution of the State, which will be the privilege of the Constituent Assembly only. We can, thus, have a clear idea in our mind as to our future on the basis of which we can enter into any relationship with either India or Pakistan if it is so decided by the Convention.

### *Implementing New Kashmir*

The socioeconomic and political program of New Kashmir did serve a good purpose. It gave a clear vision to all of us so as to what we wanted to achieve. It also helped us in successfully and peacefully putting into effect our land reforms and other progressive measures, for we had prepared the people for a change long before we took power into our hands. In India, this was not done, and, hence, the building up of a socialist State remained, by and large, a mere slogan.

If the overwhelming majority of Muslims in the State wish to join Pakistan or non-Muslim minorities to link the State with India, it is because both feel apprehensive about their future. Therefore, it is necessary for us to evolve a solution which would give a sense of safety and security to

both. Hence, the need for making our broad intentions known in advance regarding the future set-up of the State.

### *Measures for Protection of Rights*

During his early days, Maharaja Hari Singh introduced many good progressive reforms to protect the interests of the State's people, one of the measures being the State-Subject Law, for which the Hindus of the State, both Kashmiri Pandits and Dogras, had actively agitated. The chief aim of the measure was to protect the interests of the State's people. Although Kashmir has world-wide fame as the most beautiful spot on earth, it is too poor and under-developed. Therefore, it was apprehended that if such protective measures were not introduced, the richer section of society from the Indian subcontinent would buy them out, just as Israel had done with the poor Arabs. The educated section of the population did not receive due patronage at the hands of outsiders who had occupied the seat of Power in the State. This had led to a strong movement within the State in which all sections of the populace joined, and which was headed by eminent non-Muslims. Despite the pressures on us for denting this law, we have always resisted it, because the protection of the rights of the State's people is our primary responsibility.

I put the draft resolution before the delegates for their approval. In the Resolution, "Secular and Democratic Forces" have been defined as forces which believe in equal rights for people professing different religions and other persuasions.

## Press

### 4.1 PRESS CONFERENCE AT A RECEPTION HELD IN SHEIKH MOHAMMAD ABDULLAH'S HONOR BY THE KASHMIR PRESS CLUB AT AMAR SINGH CLUB, SRINAGAR, MARCH 6, 1968

If it is conceded that the people of Kashmir possess the inherent right to settle their own destiny, that would pave the way for resolving the Kashmir tangle. But the denial of this right to them would entail serious consequences to India, Pakistan, and Kashmir, alike.

#### *Indian Leaders Appreciate His Viewpoint*

While I was in Delhi, I had free exchange of views with leaders of different schools of thought to whom I fully explained my viewpoint in this regard. I am happy to say that my approach is now better appreciated. However, the question is a delicate one. While these conversations are still in progress, the disclosure of the details connected therewith would, I am afraid, create complications.

#### *Need to Clear the Vitiating Atmosphere*

I am not secretive by temperament, nor do I believe in withholding things. As a matter of fact, friends sometimes complain that I take the public too

much into confidence. I know you are all anxious to know the details of my talks in New Delhi, but I crave their indulgence. In due course, everything will be placed before you. Our first task is to clear the present atmosphere vitiated by doubt and suspicion, by hate and spite, which has poisoned Indo-Pak relations. In the fulfillment of this task, I count on everyone's support. I observe that we must all come together and help the two countries in establishing amity and concord between them.

### *Kashmir Craves for Life of Honor*

For centuries past, Kashmiris have been the objects of both suppression and repression. They aspired to a life of honor with peace in their land. They have their own ambitions, which still remain unfulfilled. We should, however, take a broad view of the matter. We cannot run away from the compulsions of geography, as we are a part of the subcontinent, which has been partitioned. Our own well-being is linked with the welfare of our two great neighbors—India and Pakistan. But the welfare of those two countries is largely dependent on friendly relations between them. Unfortunately, the expectations of the people in that regard have not materialized. The main reason for this is that each has entertained apprehensions and fears about the other. Each country is spending huge amounts, quite disproportionate to their resources, on their defense, and, therefore, has to resort to borrowing from other countries.

### *Indo-Pak Interests Coalesce*

This state of affairs has imposed great burdens on the two countries and do not permit them to advance and progress. If they want to have the place to which they are entitled in the comity of nations, they would have to settle their differences. This is an objective for which we all have to work. We cannot leave this task only to those holding governmental office; some of them lack the requisite strength and determination. They yield to various pressures, which often sway them from the right path. It is for this reason that they sometimes adopt unreasonable attitudes in regard to various questions.

Take, for example, the question of language. India may appear to be united, but is it integrated emotionally too? The people in the South



apprehend domination by the North, and in many places voices of secession are raised. Such trends can only be checked by ensuring justice and fair play to all. But in our society sentiment is often allowed to get the better of reason. If India and Pakistan are to come closer and progress along the lines I have indicated, the path of emotionalism and sentimentalism will have to be abandoned.

We must remember that neither Pakistan nor Kashmir can enjoy safety if disruptive tendencies are allowed to flourish in India. Notwithstanding the fact that they are two independent countries, their interests coalesce.

### *Appeal to the Press*

I appeal to the Press to play its noble role in fulfillment of this task. The printed word can make a large impact on the public mind.

The gentlemen of the Press are requested to rise above personal prejudices and are expected to look at problems from a detached and independent point of view, and, thus, make their contribution to the solution of many vexed questions.

### *Some Indian Leaders Want Peace with Pakistan*

Leaders in Delhi appeared to me to broadly agree with my basic approach; many of them have assured me that they would not be found wanting in helping to establish good neighborly relations and better understanding between India and Pakistan.

It is true that statements to the contrary have emanated from some persons, but I have no doubt that even they are conscious of the gravity of the matter. I am hopeful that if we all persevere in our efforts, an improvement can be expected. The question of my being satisfied with Delhi talks, or otherwise, cannot yet arise, because the conversations have only just begun.

### *Summit Possible in a Favorable Atmosphere*

My efforts to bring about a summit meeting between India and Pakistan will not materialize until the ground has been prepared and a proper climate conducive to his success has been created.

### *Difficulties of Pakistan Should Be Understood*

The people of Pakistan have also got emotionally involved in the Kashmir question, and any government there would be hard put to it is that question is relegated to the background. The intransigence and narrow outlook brought to bear on the question by some Indian leaders is responsible for this state of affairs. In the past, they have stated and ad nauseam that the Kashmir question has been settled, and there is nothing further to negotiate. If the question has been settled, why is there a cease-fire line in operation? Why are huge armies facing each other across that line? Why is the question still before the Security Council?

### *We Should Face the Realities*

Some Indian leaders contend that they will not yield an inch of Kashmir to Pakistan, because that country is no party to the dispute. But they ignore the fact that there have been two wars—one in 1947 and the other in 1965—and even some territory of Jammu and Kashmir has been seized during the course, thereof, by the one from the other and has to be restored to either. It would, therefore, appear that such statements amounted to no more than slogan mongering, which has no relation whatsoever to reality.

### *Vested Interests Biggest Hurdle*

A new class with vested interests has emerged which is interested in keeping this question hanging, so that they can make hay while the sun of uncertainty and suspense is shining on them. This class is largely responsible for creating hurdles in the way of a settlement.

Take, for example, the case of governments in the State: what had happened in Bakshi Ghulam Mohammad's time? A good bit of the money which India had made available for developmental purposes was expended during that regime in canvassing and maintaining lobbies favorable to it in Delhi. Many a bogey had been raised and many myths created in ensuring its hegemony over the State for so long. If that question had been settled, they would have lost all their value. Huge amounts were spent on the observance of such frivolities as "Shab-i-Shalimar" and "Jashn-i-Kashmir"—a case of Nero fiddling while Rome was burning, as poor Kashmiris, faced with dire starvation, could ill afford such inanities.

I have no personal axe to grind as far as the present government in the State is concerned. Its role, however, is publicly known.

### *Emotional Approach Should Be Given Up*

As a sequel to the 1965 Indo-Pak clash, strong feelings have been aroused in regard to Pakistan. But national problems cannot be satisfactorily solved if we adopt an emotional attitude in disregard of hard realities. Pakistan is one such reality, and its existence cannot be gainsaid.

### *Indo-Pak Amity Essential*

I will continue my efforts for Indo-Pak amity in collaboration with Shri Rajagopalachari and shri J. P. Narayan. I am not unconscious of the internal problems facing India. I have had talks with various Indian leaders in that connection. I am willing to offer my good offices in any attempt to solve these problems.

### *Determination and Will Necessary for Settlement*

Although Indian government leaders are quite alive to the need for Indo-Pak amity and to the urgency of settling the Kashmir issue, yet the necessary determination and will are lacking. If it is necessary to take a decision in the national interest, then such a decision must be taken and implemented without procrastination—whatsoever the difficulty.

It is, therefore, necessary for us to strengthen their hands, so as to facilitate their task.

### *The People of the State Alone Can Determine Their Future*

Converting the cease-fire line into a permanent International line would portray that the Kashmiri people are being treated as mere chattel. Such an issue can only be decided by the people of Kashmir themselves. Holding of a plebiscite is one such method, but certainly not the only method.

Once the inherent right of the people to decide their own destiny has been conceded, ways can be found to settle this long standing matter. The fundamental issue is that the people of Kashmir should be enabled to have a sense of participation. If there is a sincere desire to find a way, then the parties concerned can sit together and evolve a solution.

*The Might of Independent Kashmir*

Why should the demand for giving Kashmir an independent status be particularly associated with me? I recall that in 1948 the Hindustan Times (a leading daily of India) had advocated, in an editorial, independence for Kashmir. Shri Gopalaswami Ayyangar had also endorsed their idea in the Security Council. In this connection, I explained my own views in the Constituent Assembly in 1951. There is no change in my views.

*Hindus Generally Aloof in Meerut Disturbances*

Meerut City in India has a Hindu majority, which has not, by and large, taken part in the recent riots there. As a matter of fact, there have been some professional rioters there at work who thrive on such disturbances. The riots there were preplanned, and innocent people have suffered in consequence. I condemn the behavior of the police there, as they are reported to have used force on innocent people. (*Speeches and Interviews*, 29–35)

4.2 SHEIKH MOHAMMAD ABDULLAH'S INTERVIEW  
FOR THE SUPPLEMENTARY ISSUE (1968) OF  
SHABISTAN URDU DIGEST, NEW DELHI

Sheikh Mohammad Abdullah was interviewed for the Supplementary Issue of *Shabistan Urdu Digest*, New Delhi, in 1968. This interview was translated into English, and rights to publish the English translation were given to Messrs Narain Dass & Sons, Dehra Dun, by the General Manager of the Shama Group, Asaf Ali Road, New Delhi. I found the interview as well as the Urdu translation in the family archives, to which I had access. Palit & Palit Publishers published the interview as part of the book *The Testament of Sheikh Abdullah*, which Y. D. Gundevia, who had been Foreign Secretary under Indian Prime Ministers Jawaharlal Nehru and Lal Bahadur Shastri, co-authored with Sheikh Mohammad Abdullah.

*Q.* What are your immediate plans, Sir?

*A.* I shall pick up the threads of my efforts to bring amity between India and Pakistan from the point where I left it in 1964, after Pandit Nehru's death. Since the problem of Kashmir is a matter of life and death for Kashmiris, I expect that both India and Pakistan will try to move closer together.

*Q.* What would your attitude be toward Ghulam Mohammad Sadiq and Bakshi Ghulam Mohammad?

*A.* It has been proved that the policies of these men have been harmful to Kashmir. Now it rests with them to correct their ways. I have nothing to do with the Sadiq Government, as it does not represent the Kashmiri masses. It is in office because the Government of India wants it to remain in office. I shall discuss the matter with the Indian government later.

*Q.* Would you be able to fulfill your mission in view of the bitterness that has developed during your long years of imprisonment?

*A.* The personal privations that I have undergone have not left me with bitterness. It is not a question of personal sacrifices; it is a question of the aspirations of the Kashmiri people.

*Q.* What long term plans have you made?

*A.* I have not really made any plans for the future.

*Q.* Can you tell us exactly what you want to achieve?

*A.* I want peace in the Indian subcontinent.

*Q.* Have you planned another visit to Pakistan?

*A.* No, not as yet.

*Q.* Have you any ready solution for the Kashmir problem?

*A.* I have no ready formula, nor have I planned a program so far. I shall be meeting the Prime Minister this evening and much will depend upon her attitude. I am confident that she has full knowledge of her father's views on the matter.

*Q.* Did your meetings with President Ayub Khan in 1964 have any bearing on the Indo-Pak conflict in 1965? Did not that war close forever the initiatives taken by Pandit Nehru?

*A.* After the war in 1965, the need for peaceful relations between the two countries is all the more important.

*Q.* Sir, you had expressed your gratitude to Sri Rajagopalachari and Sri Jai Prakash Narayan. Are we to assume from that that you are in agreement with their view that the solution of the Kashmir problem should be thrashed out between Delhi and Srinagar and not between Srinagar and Rawalpindi?

*A.* As far as I have understood these two great leaders, they maintain that for any solution the people of Kashmir need to be satisfied. Therefore,

whatever formula is evolved for solving the Kashmir problem, it will not affect the secular character of India nor the prestige or dignity of Pakistan. Pandit Nehru and I were in agreement that a solution of the Kashmir question should be such that it could be placed before our own people without giving rise to fresh hurdles or compromising in any way the ideal of secularism in India.

*Q.* You had stated that for the fulfillment of your mission you had intended to work in India, Pakistan, and Kashmir. Does that imply that you consider these three as separate entities?

*A.* It is not a question of separate entities. No doubt India and Pakistan are two independent countries, but it is no less true that the Kashmir problem concerns three parties. The State of Kashmir has been under dispute since 1947, and it cannot be denied that the Kashmir problem is the fundamental dispute between India and Pakistan.

*Q.* How do you propose to solve this problem?

*A.* There are only two methods of settling a dispute. One is to decide the matter by the use of force, which has already been tried twice. The other is a peaceful method and in this the essential point is that both parties should be ready to accommodate each other. Each should respect the wishes and sentiments of the other.

*Q.* What are your views about India and Pakistan?

*A.* My views are well known. If it would help, I would go to Pakistan immediately, but this would not solve the problem. In spite of the personal inconveniences that I have suffered, I have no hatred toward India. However much hatred you may have for me, I honestly hope that India will not only prosper but begin to play its proper role in the international field. It hurts me to realize that the India of our dreams has not yet emerged.

*Q.* Are you still insisting on self-determination for the people of Kashmir?

*A.* The right of self-determination is an inherent right of all peoples and no one can snatch it away. If we are free citizens, then we have inherited this right automatically. But the most important thing is, under what formula should Kashmiris be allowed to exercise this right so that the masses are satisfied? So-called "free elections" to decide the issue will not satisfy me.

*Q.* Sir, you are meeting with the Prime Minister, Mrs. Indira Gandhi, this evening. What would your reaction be if you were invited to join the Cabinet?

*A.* (Above the laughter that rolled through the audience)

I shall certainly accept this offer if it leads to any solution of the Kashmir problem.

*Q.* A reference in President Ayub Khan's recent autobiography, *Friends Not Masters*, makes it appear that your meeting with him left him with the impression that the future of Kashmir was linked only with Pakistan. How far can this assumption be correct?

*A.* (This time his own laughter prefaced his remarks) I have not read the book. I have only read extracts in Indian newspapers. Some of these statements are incorrect. I am not bound by President Ayub's view of things and I have no connection with those views. But would you expect President Ayub to write in his book that I had told him that I had permanently aligned myself with India?

*Q.* Can you tell us the circumstances of your previous arrest?

*A.* I do not want to enter into the unpleasant controversies of the past. What has always attracted me to India is the fact that it is the biggest democracy in the world. It so happened that during my Prime Ministership of Kashmir, when I had the full backing of the Kashmir Assembly, I was suddenly arrested. I represented to the President of India and the Prime Minister of India that I should be permitted to defend my own case. My representation had no effect. Now, would you say that my right to self-determination was upheld or respected in a democracy? I do not doubt anybody's intentions. It is possible that my way of thinking may be wrong, and Bakshi Ghulam Mohammad's or Mr. Sadiq's may be correct. But both of them have had ample opportunity to prove themselves in the administration. Let us consider carefully whose methods have been more beneficial for Kashmiris. These two leaders are under the illusion that they have settled the question of Kashmir once and for all. However, the results of their efforts and their administration are open for all to see.

*Q.* Do you think that it would be possible for President Ayub Khan to present to the people of Pakistan a solution to the Kashmir problem which would also be acceptable to the people of India?

*A.* If the world accepts it as a just solution, then the President of Pakistan should accept it. In my view, President Ayub sincerely wants friendly

relations with India. You may or may not agree with me, but I, honestly, believe that if a solution to the Kashmir problem is framed in the right spirit, it would be acceptable to President Ayub.

*Q.* What was the purpose of your meeting with Chinese Premier Chou En-lai in Algeria?

*A.* I wanted to know his views about the area around Gilgit which Pakistan has transferred to Chinese control. I passed on a full report of my talks with Chou En-lai through the Indian Ambassador in Algeria to the Ministry of External Affairs. I do not know of any section in the Indian Penal Code which bars a person from meeting another person. (20–25)

*Q.* Sheikh Sahib, how did your political life begin?

*A.* It goes back many years now—but in Srinagar on July 13, 1931, a serious incident occurred in which government officials resorted to firing to quell some disturbances caused by a public demonstration. I felt as if the bullets were penetrating my heart. My political life in the real sense starts with this firing on the people. A number of Kashmiris were killed or wounded, and I was helping a wounded man, he cried, ‘Abdullah, I have done my duty. Now it is for you to go on with our mission.’ I was greatly influenced by this incident. I felt that nothing could stop me after this. But the Prime Minister at that time, Pandit Hari Krishna Kaul, managed to put a temporary brake on me—by arresting me on September 21, 1931.

All my clothes were removed by the prison authorities and for thirteen days I struggled between life and death—but even this treatment and the miseries I felt could not dampen my enthusiasm. I was released on October 3, and, at once, resumed my work for the liberation of the Kashmiri masses.

On January 23, 1932, I was arrested again, but, by then, I had organized a team of workers to carry on in my place. They were a mixture of educated and uneducated Kashmiri Muslims—all bound together by their dedication to freedom. They would, I was sure, brave personal risk or even death, but they would no longer submit to dishonor.

*Q.* But what exactly were your objectives then? Are they the same even today?

*A.*

For centuries, Pathans, Mughals, Sikhs, and Dogras kept Kashmir under their rule, and they used Kashmir as a center for their pleasure and recreation. When the people of Kashmir awakened to the possibility of freedom, I wanted



to lead and encourage them. Hindus and Muslims, in fact all the residents of Kashmir, shared this new enthusiasm. In 1931, I was part of the majority of the Kashmiri public which pledged to work for freedom or to die for the cause. Our revolt and protest were directed against the Amritsar Agreement (1846). Then, when the country was being partitioned, I was in jail. Maharaja Hari Singh did not want to accede to either Pakistan or India. Pakistanis asked me to accede to Pakistan since the division of the country was on a communal basis, and Muslim majority areas had all become Pakistan. I told the Pakistanis frankly that the time had not come for Kashmiris to decide the matter. We could not give up our right of self-determination and could not accede to Pakistan simply on the ground that there was a preponderance of Muslims in Kashmir. We could not disown lakhs of Hindus of Kashmir, and anyone who tried to harm them became our enemy. There was a monarchy in Kashmir, and we wanted to decide our issues with the monarchy first. The question of accession was to be taken up later. Pakistan threatened us, but India supported our point of view. This, in a nutshell, was the basis of the fight for freedom—the main objective of my life's work.

*Q.* Sheikh Sahib, can you give me the dates of your various arrests?

*A.* My first arrest was, as I told you, in September 1931. My second arrest was on January 23, 1932, and I was in jail that time for four months and thirteen days. On May 23, 1933, I was arrested under orders of the Prime Minister of Kashmir, Col. Colvin, for two months and eighteen days. Then on July 13, 1934, I was arrested for nineteen days under orders of the Prime Minister, Mr. Wakefield. On August 29, 1938, I was arrested for the fifth time under orders of Prime Minister Sir Gopalaswami Ayyangar; I was released after six months. On May 20, 1946, I was again arrested—this time under orders of Pandit Ram Chandra Kak and I was in prison until October 1, 1947, by which time the country had been granted independence and partitioned. Fighting had already started between India and Pakistan, and I was proud to take office as Prime Minister of Kashmir. However, by August 1953, I was again under suspicion and was arrested and sent to jail for four years and five months. I was released on January 8, 1958, but Bakshi Ghulam Mohammad ordered my arrest again on April 29, 1958, and I was in jail for five years, eleven months, and nine days. After my release on April 18, 1964, I went on a pilgrimage to Mecca, and upon my return to India on May 8, 1965, I was arrested again—this time by the Government of India. My previous arrests had been made by the Kashmir government. After that, as you know, I was released by the Government of India on January 2 of the year (1968).

*Q.* Before Independence in 1947, were you in favor of the establishment of two separate nations, India and Pakistan?

*A.* The demand for the establishment of Pakistan was based on the erroneous view that Hindus and Muslims were separate nationalists. I hold that they do not belong to two different nationalities. They may indeed have individual problems but that need not separate them once and forever.

On this matter, I had long discussions with Mr. Jinnah, and since I was then President of the State People's Congress, I tried to put before him the problems of the people of Kashmir. Of course, I agreed with him in regard to the ills of the Muslim community in general but I disagreed with him about the cure for those ills. Muslims inhabited the whole continent of India and their places of worship, educational institutions, and properties were all over the country. If the partition of the country into Hindustan and Pakistan was accepted, what would happen to Muslims and their property if they fell outside the new Pakistan?

I was actively involved in seeking a solution to these matters when the Cripps Mission arrived in India. They presented another formula: according to their suggestion, India's unity would be safeguarded by allotting special representation to minorities, including Muslims. Mr. Jinnah accepted the Cripps Mission proposals, which meant, in effect, that he had rescinded his demand for Pakistan. But, I was most taken aback when Pandit Nehru rejected Cripps proposals. The result was that the demand for Pakistan was renewed.

Pakistan was not a creation of Mr. Jinnah's. Pakistan was brought into being by Maulana Azad, Pandit Nehru, and Sardar Patel. These people were responsible for the division of the country. If they had accepted Cripps proposals, there would have been no Pakistan and no bloodshed in the Indian subcontinent later.

I had also met the Cabinet Mission and had put my views before them, but at the time of partition, I was in jail and in no position to prevent the unnecessary division of the people.

*Q.* Khan Abdul Ghaffar Khan among others believes that the idea of partitioning India was conceived by outside powers who had no real interest in solving the problems of the nation. Do you agree with this?

*A.* No, the fault is ours. Indo-Pak friendship should always be the aim of well-wishers of both countries. It is not now necessary that India and Pakistan merge—India has friendly relations with Burma, Nepal, and Ceylon,

and there is no fear in the minds of those nations that India will try to absorb them. Then why should Pakistan have such fears? It is the duty of all patriotic Indians, including Khan Abdul Ghaffar Khan, to nullify the efforts of those who sow the seeds of discord between India and Pakistan.

*Q.* When you were released from jail in October 1947, how did you find conditions in Kashmir?

*A.* I found Kashmir in a very uncertain and unsettled condition. The future was very bleak ... people doubted that India and Pakistan would be able to retain their independence. I wanted peace and prosperity for the Kashmiri masses above anything else and I, therefore, told the Congress and the Muslim League not to press Kashmiris for an immediate decision on accession and that time must be given for reorganization of the State.

I sent one of my colleagues, Ghulam Mohammad Sadiq, who is now the Chief Minister of Kashmir, to Lahore to meet the Prime Minister of Pakistan, Mr. Liaquat Ali Khan, and to put my view of things before him. Unfortunately, Liaquat Ali Khan contended that the partition of the country was based on communal majorities, and since Kashmir was a predominantly Muslim State, Pakistan had first right on Kashmir. I did not accept this view. Ghulam Mohammad Sadiq told the leaders of Pakistan that no decision should be forced on Kashmir; time should be given to the people to make a decision and whatever the decision, Pakistan and India should accept it.

Liaquat Ali Khan and Ghulam Mohammad Sadiq could not agree on any solution, and Sadiq returned to Kashmir. Soon after his return, raiders from Pakistan attacked Kashmir.

In the midst of this time of political confusion and emotional stresses, swarms of refugees were moving from one country to the other, and the sick and wounded were everywhere. I was moved to alleviate the sufferings of both Hindus and Muslims. When I asked my wife about it, she agreed at once to help me in relief work. She gave up purdah and did commendable work in organizing relief camps. For her hard work and sincere efforts, she was named "The Benevolent Mother" by Kashmiris and was known by this name throughout the State.

*Q.* What was your reaction when Pakistani raiders entered Kashmir in the name of Islam?

*A.* Never in my life have I made any distinction between a Hindu and a Muslim. I told the people of Pakistan too that the question of Kashmir was not one of Hindu and Muslim. Pakistan ignored me and

threatened us with dire consequences, and the results were disastrous. There were dead bodies lying all over Kashmir for days! But I did not lose heart. I cared only for my duty toward Kashmiris and I continued to discharge it day and night.

During that period, the people of Poonch tried to accede to Pakistan. Armies were sent to Poonch to meet the disturbances, and there were great massacres in the area. And then, all of a sudden, Pakistan attacked Kashmir. I do not agree with those who say that Pakistan attacked Kashmir to save Kashmir or that they had the least sympathy for Kashmiri Muslims. If they had had any feelings for Kashmiri Muslims, they would have attacked Jammu first as that is a predominantly Hindu province.

Pakistan attempted to settle the Kashmir issue by means of the sword, but Kashmiris resisted the attempt. During this period, Kashmiri volunteers guarded the houses of Hindus to see that no harm was done to them. Pakistani raiders marching onwards till they reached Srinagar (sic). The entire army of the ruler (Maharaja Hari Singh) was wiped out, and the ruler had to send to India for aid.

*Q.* What role did you play in seeking aid from India? What was your attitude about accession to India?

*A.* At that time I told Gandhiji myself that Kashmiris were fighting against Pakistan to uphold certain principles. In reply, the statesmen of India argued that they would come to the rescue of Kashmir only if the instrument of accession was signed.

Whatever happened was due to the force of circumstances. I have already said that at the time of partition I was in jail and the Maharaja of Kashmir wanted to remain independent. He hoped to have friendly relations with both India and Pakistan, and, accordingly, he did not accede to either. He wanted to make only temporary agreements, and while India delayed such an agreement, Pakistan entered into it. Under this agreement Pakistan got control over all means of communications, post offices, and telegraph offices, and the Pakistani flag fluttered on all such buildings.

*Q.* Sheikh Sahib, what was the aftermath of Kashmir's accession to India?

*A.* We were told that there would be no interference by India in Kashmir's internal matters. Sardar Patel was busy getting the instruments of accession signed in the various Indian states and he was successful in all cases, but he could not come to terms with Kashmir. The Muslims of Kashmir

feared that they would be lost in the vastness of India. I warned the leading statesmen of the time that India should not interfere with the independence of Kashmir and should let things proceed slowly for the time being. They did not heed my advice; suddenly, India announced to the world that Kashmir had acceded to India as an inseparable part of the new nation by the instrument of accession signed by the ruler of Kashmir. Cleverly, the temporary accession was transformed into a permanent accession.

I was very perturbed and told Pandit Nehru, who claimed to be a champion of independence and democracy, that India had gone back on its promise. In reply, Nehru said, 'Well, it is all quite a muddle at the moment.' This callous reply struck me very deeply but did not unnerve me, and I continued to meet the challenge of the time and especially the changed mentality of India. And this determination continues to this day. If we can fight Pakistan with whom we have religious and ethnic ties, why can't we fight other forces. A true Muslim has no fear of death. The best death is that death which one meets on the battlefield.

So far there has been no referendum in Kashmir. Weak leaders have been put in power, and my brave colleagues and I have been jailed. But still not a single soul is prepared to accept the idea that Kashmir has finally acceded to India. The picture of Kashmir has changed a lot, and it is a different Kashmir than it was at the time of partition. There are still those Muslims who raised the slogans, 'Long Live Gandhi and Nehru!' and who wanted to live in peace and friendship with India, but the dishonesty of Indian statesmen has weakened their faith in India. They have witnessed riots, corruption, the plight of the poor people in India and the luxury of the wealthy, and they are greatly influenced by these things. As a result, a significant change has taken place in their outlook.

*Q.* When you became Prime Minister of Kashmir, what matters required your attention most urgently? How did you handle them?

*A.* The most important and dangerous matter was the attitudes of Muslims and Hindus toward each other. They looked upon each other with great suspicion and fear, and I have wanted to remove these unnecessary burdens from their minds. The Hindus of Jammu and Kashmir could not imagine that they could become a part of Pakistan, because they knew what had befallen other Hindus in Pakistan. Similarly, the Muslims of Kashmir feared the results of accession to India. The fate of the Muslims in Kapurthala and other Punjabi states was fresh in their minds.

Certain developments in India further complicated the situation. The Hindu Mahasabha and some other organizations were of the opinion that since the Muslims had created an exclusively Muslim country, the Hindus must have a Hindu State. This difference in ideology created a big problem for Kashmiris who believed only in human values and did not see things in terms of Hindus, Muslims, Sikhs, or other religious groups.

Therefore, the biggest problem for me was to create mutual confidence between the two communities and to remove all fear from their minds. I felt that the accession of Kashmir to India could satisfy the Hindus well enough but the Muslims too ought to be satisfied. I thought that if I assured the Muslims that there would be no interference from India in the internal affairs of Kashmir, they too would be mollified. I was impressed by the democratic principles of India, and the Muslims of Kashmir could easily be made to understand that their interests would be served by our acceding to India, with full freedom in their internal matters.

I was successful in creating confidence among both the Muslims and the Hindus as well, in spite of the extreme positions taken by some communal organizations. The Kashmiris did not want an iron-handed rule; Kashmiris, whether Hindu or Muslim, have a similar character, similar complexion, belong to the same race, and even have similar names. They wanted to live in peace together, and I wanted to help them.

*Q.* Did you ever feel there was any necessity of holding an investigation into the circumstances of the death of Shyama Prasad Mukherjee?

*A.* You see, you must look into the background of the event to fully appreciate this. Restrictions of entry into Jammu and Kashmir were imposed by the Central Government; Defense of India Rules had declared Kashmir to be a war zone. Even as Prime Minister of Kashmir I could move about in the State only with a special pass in my possession. I had protested against these restrictions in the very beginning, but my protest proved fruitless. When Shyama Prasad Mukherjee decided to break these restrictions, I asked Bakshi Ghulam Mohammad, the Home Minister of Kashmir, to consult Pandit Nehru about it. Dr. Mukherjee was a friend of mine, and I had great regard for him. When the Home Minister decided to arrest him and interned him in a private home in Nishat Bagh, I was naturally very upset. Pandit Nehru and Maulana Azad came to Kashmir about that time, and I expected them to meet Dr. Mukherjee, but they did not. I had suggested that after arresting Dr. Mukherjee he should be sent to Delhi, but that was not done. Bakshi Ghulam Mohammad held

the portfolio of Home Affairs, and Shyam Lal Saraf the portfolio of Health and Jails. As a member of the administration, I do not consider myself wholly free of responsibility in the matter, but these colleagues of mine were directly in charge of the departments concerned, and I could establish contact with Dr. Mukherjee only through them. I did not even get authentic reports about his health from these people; and I received the news of his death quite unexpectedly one morning.

*Q.* But why didn't you order an inquiry into the whole matter? Why could not the Chief Justice of the Kashmir High Court be appointed to look into the matter?

*A.* Looking back, I feel I should have done that. But, at the time, I suggested that Dr. B. C. Roy might come to Kashmir and make general enquiries. He agreed to come but later was unable to do so. I especially wanted the Central Government to look into this matter so that all misunderstandings could be put to rest. In the atmosphere that was prevailing, even the Chief Justice of Kashmir would not have been free from criticism or the charge of impartiality. Unfortunately, the Central Government did not hold an investigation. During this period, on the 9th of August, a vicious conspiracy was hatched against me and contrary to all principles of justice and fair play, I was dismissed and jailed. On my release in 1958, I demanded an impartial enquiry into Dr. Mukherjee's death but no attention was paid to my request. If there are any doubts even today, an impartial enquiry can be held and I am prepared to bear the consequences if anyone thinks I had a hand in Dr. Mukherjee's death.

*Q.* Do you feel that the presence of the Indian Army in Kashmir increased tensions between the Hindus and Muslims of Kashmir?

*A.* In this respect, I had to face insurmountable difficulties. When the first battalion of Indian Army troops arrived in 1947, there was some misunderstanding about the purpose for which it had been sent. The army seemed to feel that a war was being waged between Hindus and Muslims, whether the Muslims were from Pakistan or Kashmir itself. I had quite a time erasing this idea.

I'll give you an example of the kinds of difficulties I faced. A Sikh regiment from Patiala asked for the services of a few *razakars*. We sent them some volunteers to help them, but the next morning four of these volunteers were untraceable. When the regiment left, we found the bodies of these four volunteers and naturally the recovery of the dead bodies caused quite

a stir throughout Kashmir. I called a conference at once and told those present, "The fault does not lie with those who killed the volunteers, because they have seen their own relatives murdered most ruthlessly. These events have stirred a volcano of hatred in them, and they, therefore, consider every Muslim their enemy. Our job is to cleanse the hatred from their minds. We should explain to them thoroughly that we are not fighting a battle of Hindus and Muslims but rather we are fighting for a noble cause. We have decided to tell the commanders of these forces to explain to their troops the purpose of this war." We acted on this decision and the results from then onwards were very satisfactory.

*Q.* After the cease-fire, when you were able to start implementing the reforms you had planned, did you encounter any opposition from more conservative elements in the population?

*A.* First, I consolidated the administration and got the government machinery functioning. But I had to fulfill my promises to the Kashmiri masses. Among these promises were agricultural reforms, we abolished the *zamindari* and *jagirdari* systems in the State, and land was distributed to the actual tillers of the soil. There were Hindus and well as Muslims in the *jagirdar* class, but the Hindus were able to arouse some sympathy for themselves in Delhi. They propogandized against my government and indicated that my programs were communally based. There were people in Delhi who believed them and, as a result, relations between the Central Government and the Government of Kashmir became very strained. We maintained then and still do that what we did was not based on communal considerations at all but purely on economic necessity. In the same way, when we tried to annul the debts of the peasants to the money-lenders, the Hindu money-lenders petitioned Delhi for assistance. Finally, when we abolished the hereditary rights of the Maharaja, those dependent on the monarchy reacted vigorously and ascribed our actions to communal motives, thus, increasing the tension between the center and the state government.

*Q.* There was criticism that you had adopted some discriminatory policies in the services in the State. How do you refute that criticism?

*A.* I do not call what I did discriminatory. During the rule of the Maharaja, Muslims did not have representation in the services proportionate to their population in the State. After 1947, they naturally demanded more representation. A similar situation arose in Hyderabad where the Hindus demanded representation according to their superior numbers there. My main problem was that I could not introduce drastic changes in policy. I could not remove



some people from office, since they had been holding the positions for a long time. I wanted to find alternative work for them, and I introduced additional reforms but at a gradual pace. I tried to give some representation to those persons who had inadequate—or no—representation. Now would you call this a policy of discrimination?

*Q.* Before the elections of the Constituent Assembly of Kashmir in 1952, you said that in the absence of a plebiscite, the Constituent Assembly was competent enough to decide the Kashmir question. What was the reaction to this announcement of yours?

*A.* I was quite satisfied that the Constituent Assembly could, in the absence of a plebiscite, resolve the issue of Kashmir once and for all as they were the duly elected representatives of the Kashmiri people. But the Government of India did not approve of my plan at all. However, Pandit Nehru was very disturbed and said that he could not go back on the promises made to the United Nations. Mr. B. N. Rau, the permanent representative of India at the United Nations, took the same position and declared in the United Nations that although the assemblies of the states of India have the right to decide their own issues, in the case of Kashmir, the promise of the plebiscite had to be honored. Thus the promise of the plebiscite was reaffirmed, and the right of the people of Kashmir to decide their own future was restated.

*Q.* I have heard that you were going to declare Kashmir completely independent from India on August 21, 1953, but that before you could do so, you were arrested on August 9. Is this true?

*A.* My arrest on August 9, 1953, was based on my differences with the Government of India—differences which had existed for some time. The Indian government was going back on promises made to me and the people of Kashmir. My contention was that if the government went back on its promises it would mean a loss of prestige to Delhi and to me. All the sacrifices of the people of Kashmir would be wasted, and the morale of Kashmiris would plunge to a new low. I even said that if these promises were not fulfilled, the prestige and reputation of Pandit Nehru would be affected, and India's position in the eyes of other nations would be diminished. I issued a warning to India, but nobody paid any heed, and my opponents quickly came out in the open.

The night of August 9 was very cold. I was staying at the government guest house in Gulmarg while on tour. My wife and children were with me along

with my secretary and other staff. At about four o' clock in the morning, my secretary awakened me and informed me that the Dak Bungalow was surrounded by armed military police. I came out of my bedroom and saw a police superintendent whom I knew personally. I asked him what authority he had to come to the rest house in the middle of the night. Instead of replying, he showed me the warrant for my arrest and pointed toward the soldiers armed with machine guns. I asked him to allow me time to finish my morning prayers, and he agreed. I had just finished my prayers when Maharaja Karan Singh's ADC delivered a letter to me from the Maharaja offering his sympathies on my arrest. The letter also conveyed a notice of my dismissal as Prime Minister. Attached to the letter was another document signed by Bakshi Ghulam Mohammad, Shyam Lal Saraf, and Girdhari Lal Dogra, indicating that they all had lost confidence in my leadership. After reading the letter, I said to myself that the Maharaja had no authority to dismiss me and my ministry. At about 4:20 am, I bade goodbye to my wife and children and moved under a military escort to Udhampur, about 175 miles from Gulmarg.

I was imprisoned in a house belonging to the ruler of Kashmir, and all my communication with the outside world came to an end. After a few days, I learned that my house in Srinagar had been sealed, and my wife and children were not permitted to stay there. My family was helpless and had no one to turn to. People were so afraid of the regime in Kashmir that they were reluctant to give their houses on rent to my children. For some time the members of my family stayed with a relative, Khwaja Ali Shah, but then, fortunately, a Hindu, Madan Lal, came to my family's rescue, and in spite of the coercive measures of the government, he extended a hand of friendship to my wife and children by offering them a portion of his house. Later, my wife was offered an allowance by the government, but she refused to accept it.

In spite of this treatment, my personal relations with Pandit Nehru continued to be very good. As soon as he learned of the privations suffered by my family, he issued orders for their rehabilitation, and my wife had to accept an allowance from the government. I was permitted to have newspapers while in detention and was allowed to listen to the radio—a radio on which all the stations had been sealed except Srinagar. Probably the person who sealed the stations did not know that I had been a science student. In no time, I was able to break all the seals and listen to any station I chose.

I was quite happy, as a matter of fact, while I was in jail. My opponents and adversaries must have been jubilant thinking that they had cut off my connections with the rest of the world, but could they shut me out or separate me from my God, who is my protector and with whom I have permanent and lasting ties? My God was with me, and any person who establishes a relation with God can never feel lonely.

I had two choices open to me: one could lead to luxury and affluence, the other to discomfort and misery. After some careful thinking, I decided on the course of action beset with difficulties and discomforts. It was a course of faith and truth nevertheless, and my heart urged me to accept it. I firmly believed that the darkness would soon disappear, and, therefore, I bowed my head to the decision.

Pandit Nehru was a gentle soul. Within a few months, the attitude of the jail administrators toward me changed considerably. My wife and children were permitted to see me, and I could get authentic information about events in Kashmir. In comparison to my previous experiences in jail, the months of 1953–54 were quite comfortable, and I was treated as a human being with certain facilities and conveniences which had been sorely lacking earlier.

*Q.* While you were in jail, did you make any changes in your plans for Kashmir or in your view of the situation?

*A.* Even today I stand by the promises I made to the people of Kashmir. I do not call a person a man if he goes back on his promises. When people came to know that Sheikh Abdullah would not quietly say yes to every directive, I was arrested. Some of my companions deserted me, and it was a trying time for me. But I had decided to sacrifice worldly comforts for my principles. I knew full well the consequences of my decision: personal inconvenience, hunger, privation for my family, jail. But by God! These difficulties pale into insignificance when compared to the hardships and sacrifices of our dear Prophet in preaching the principles of Islam.

I am a sincere friend of India and, therefore, I cannot be her enemy. I had been put in jail for fourteen years only because of my attitudes and beliefs. But I swear by God, who controls my life, that I was composed and at ease and, for this reason, the people who put me in prison are nor ashamed and repentant, and I am consoling them! I am convinced that we must engender love and affection for each other for hatred will breed only division and enmity. You can hold Kashmir in subjugation with bayonets only for a short while. You can cut Kashmiris to pieces, but you cannot win their

hearts by force. The earnest desires, wishes, and longings of Kashmiris will certainly lead them to their destination. The strength of love is mightier than the force of guns. I remember clearly the words of Acharya Bhave when three years ago (in 1965), he said in one of his speeches that the problem of Kashmir was not yet settled. To say that Kashmir was a part of India like Bombay or Delhi is to shut your eyes to reality. (40–49)

*Q.* You have frequently referred to self-determination for the people of Kashmir, but it is true, is it not, that there have been free elections held in Kashmir for representatives to the state assembly? Are Kashmiris not exercising a certain amount of self-determination there?

*A.* The political parties that participate in elections to the Kashmir Assembly are all under the influence of Indian parties and these elections, as such, are not fair. We willingly acceded to India, fought against Pakistan, and secured India's favor for ourselves. But now conditions have changed considerably, and the type of democracy in power in Kashmir is entirely unsuited to the Kashmiri masses."

*Q.* Which political party in Kashmir has the biggest following?

*A.* The Congress party in Kashmir exists in name only. The National Conference is also dying out. The Plebiscite Front has a large following, and this is the only party which has been able to capture the hearts of the people.

*Q.* Do you have any preference among the political parties of India?

*A.* I like every political party which holds human values and justice in high esteem. I like a party which sides with persons whose rights have been violated whether the person is a Hindu, Muslim, or Sikh. I am a friend of suffering people, and my first preference is for the party which upholds the rights of the down-trodden.

*Q.* What is your opinion about communism?

*A.* You will find communism in very country where people are poor and no attention is paid to their condition. I think communism will flourish most in a country where there is a big gap between man and man and class and class. Fortunately, there is not much leaning toward communism in Kashmir.

*Q.* Would you be able to deal with reactionary organizations like the Jan Sangh?

*A.* I am not a man to be easily subdued by any party. During my prime ministership, I had control over these organizations, but now, of course, that control is no longer there.

*Q.* I believe you have great differences of opinion with the former Jan Sangh president, Professor Balraj Madhok?

*A.* I know Professor Madhok very well, and I do not agree with many things he says. I pray to God to show him the right path. In 1947, when Kashmiris were experiencing great tragedies, his role was very harmful to the people and the State. It is regrettable that on his return to India, he praised his own actions. I had issued a warrant for his arrest, but he returned to India before it could be executed. May God show him the path followed by the Buddha, Lord Krishna, and the other saints of India for the guidance of the Indian people.

*Q.* Have you developed good relations with leftist parties?

*A.* I had very good relations with the progressive parties of the country but, unfortunately, some leftist elements in 1953 misunderstood me. Now, however, I think that the clouds of misunderstanding have dispersed, and there seems to be a good chance for mutual understanding. (Abdullah and Gundevia, *Testament*, 52–53)

*Q.* Which public figures do you think have influenced your political views?

*A.* Since I was a student, politics has attracted me—and since that time, the whole world has been in a state of turmoil. During my youth, a few personalities appeared on the Indian scene and attracted innumerable young people to them. Among these were Mahatma Gandhi, Maulana Mohammad Ali, Maulana Shaukat Ali, Pandit Nehru, and Maulana Abul Kalam Azad. Like other young men, I was attracted toward these figures. Two other personalities—Ghazi Abdul Karim and Mustafa Keman Pasha outside India also had considerable influence on me. They were great freedom fighters and rendered valuable service to their countries.

*Q.* Other than the Quran, which books do you particularly cherish?

*A.* The poetry of Iqbal has always been my favorite and has left deep impressions on me. His poetry creates an emotional upheaval within me and has given new meaning to my life with every reading. I have met Iqbal a number of times, and I hold him in high esteem for his message to the Islamic world. I wish I knew Persian, so I could delve deeper into Iqbal's philosophy in his Persian poems. Nonetheless, my greatest guide has been Islamic history and the Quran. Also, Abul Kalam Azad's writings in *Al Hilal* and *Al Balagh*, the writings of Allama Mashriqui, the life of Napoleon, Rousseau's philosophy, and the history of the French Revolution have influenced my thinking and helped shape my ideas.

*Q.* Is Iqbal your favorite Urdu poet?

*A.* Of course, my field of activity is certainly far removed from poetry and literature, but, yes, Iqbal's poetry does have the greatest attraction for me. I am also fond of Hafeez Jullundhri's work, and I know him personally.

*Q.* What do you think has been your most unforgettable experience?

*A.* My first arrest. Some of my colleagues and I, after our arrest, were detained in some barracks in Badami Bagh. The people of Kashmir were greatly agitated about our arrest and were demanding our immediate release. Fearing that people might try to release us forcibly, the authorities transferred us in the middle of the night to Hari Parbat Fort.

We were sleeping when at about two o'clock in the morning, we were rudely awakened, handcuffed, and told to board a military truck. We thought that we would either be executed then and there or transferred outside Kashmir. We realized after traveling some distance that we were going toward Srinagar. There was complete silence everywhere and nothing was moving on the road except a few soldiers standing at intervals armed with rifles.

The truck stopped at Hari Parbat Fort, and we were ushered inside. Pointing to a dark and dingy room, the police officer asked who wanted to go in first. Ghulam Nabi bravely offered to go, but I said that as a group had chosen me as their leader, I would go first. Before entering the room, I addressed them briefly:

Dear Comrades, everyone who comes into this world must die some day and must experience separation from his near and dear ones. If you find me separated from you, do not mind because this separation is only temporary. Soon we shall meet in the other world. People of faith need not worry about separation nor should they fear death. Whether we die today or tomorrow, we should be happy in the realization that we are sacrificing our lives for our countrymen. At least we shall not be dying the miserable death of slaves. I have full faith that our aims and objectives will be brought nearer fulfillment through this sacrifice.

After my brief speech, I entered the cell. It was absolutely dark and devoid of bedding or conveniences. Nevertheless, we were happy enough when we discovered that we had been brought there for detention and not for execution.

Some reports have suggested that during my detention in Hari Parbat Fort Maulana Azad, who was visiting Kashmir at the time, came to meet me. This is incorrect. In fact, soon after my release, I went to see Maulana Azad with a minister from Kashmir, Wazir Nawab Khusro Jung.

There is another event in my life that I would like to record with you—Mahatma Gandhi’s visit to Aligarh Muslim University. He came to speak to the students of the University, and Professor Sharif, the acting Vice-Chancellor, in his welcome speech said that the students should not humble themselves before anyone for their just rights. This sentence of Professor Sharif’s made a deep impression on me, and I have made it a principle of my life since then.

*Q.* Were there any other events or situations which have impressed you especially?

*A.* Just look at the history of Kashmir—on any page you will find that the ruling class has always exploited poor Kashmiris. The limit of this exploitation was the mortgaging of Kashmiri women to money-lenders when their families could not pay their debts. And this was true for Hindus and Muslims alike.

Sometime ago I came across a number of Hindu families in Rajouri whose possessions had been confiscated by the representative of the ruler—who was himself a Hindu. Why should the Hindu ruler exploit the Hindu population? But you see, it was not a question of Hindu or Muslim but that of exploiter and exploited. The exploitation goes on against humanity at large. Since I am a Muslim, and the Muslim religion enjoins us to resist exploitation, I decided to fight this evil. I enlarged the Kashmir Muslim Conference and formed the National Conference. I told my followers, “If you, Hindus, Muslims, and Sikhs of Kashmir, are going to fight against injustice and tyranny, you must all join my camp.” My slogan echoed not only in the Valley of Kashmir, in the hills of Jammu, and in the snow covered peaks of Gilgit and Ladakh, but also well beyond Kashmir.

*Q.* You seem to have concentrated your attention solely on Kashmir and the problems there. Are you also interested in helping the Muslims of the rest of India?

*A.* My special field is Kashmir. How can I leave the cause of Kashmiri Muslims for whom I have taken upon myself a responsibility? A time may come when after discharging my duty toward Kashmir I can come out to take up the cause of Indian Muslims. But one should not conclude from this that I am not interested in the problems of Indian Muslims.

*Q.* Do you think it would be wise for Muslims to form an exclusive political party for the protection of their rights?

*A.* I have not really given much thought to this. Until I meet some of the Muslim leaders and diagnose the disease, I cannot suggest a remedy. Under the circumstances, I cannot guide the Muslims of India nor can I run the risk of giving them advice. But Indian Muslims must unite, forget their differences, and strive for new understanding and purpose. When I was in prison, I heard that the Muslims of India had organized a convention and had established an advisory council. This sort of thing can be quite useful.

*Q.* What about the Jamiat-ul-Ulema?*A.* I have heard that some differences of opinion have cropped up among the members of this organization. These differences are harmful to their interests and might lead to the death of the party. Muslims have to seriously consider whether they should form a strong single party of their own or join hands with some other political party. The disappearance of the Muslim League in India leads to some doubt regarding the possibility of forming an exclusively Muslim political party.

But the whole Muslim situation today worries me. Some wish to form a party to promote religious aims; others are organizing educational societies; and some are only interested in maintaining their own leadership. The result is that little useful effort is put into all this. Muslims should, I feel, unite to form a common platform for themselves. They should try to stand on their own feet—not depend upon the support of other parties. (Abdullah and Gundevia, *Testament*, 56–59)

*Q.* What remedy could you suggest for the periodic Hindu-Muslim riots?

*A.* Disturbances are a curse of God. They not only retard the progress of the country, but they put the best human qualities to shame. The disturbances can be stopped if the rulers of the country are clean at heart and if they view Hindus and Muslims not as Hindus and Muslims but as human beings.

The Prophet Mohammad's excellent qualities and habits can be our example. If Muslims seek guidance from his teachings, all their problems can be solved. Impeding any solution is the fact that the conduct of Muslims has deviated greatly from the teachings and practices of the Prophet. We have no fear of God left, and yet only full faith in god will direct our lives in peace. The concept of secularism is not clear in many minds. The day people understand the correct implications of secularism and begin to respect the idea, most of our difficulties will end.



*Q.* Do you think the personal law of Muslims should be interpreted rigidly or can some liberties be taken with it?

*A.* Islamic law did not allow four marriages for the sake of satisfying sensuality. The underlying idea was to improve the society of the times where people used to contract a number of marriages. The provisions in the Quran are restrictive rather than permissive. Times have changes naturally, and the population of the world is increasing rapidly. The idea of family planning should not be looked at from the religious point of view. The problem is economic.

*Q.* Would you like to attend a meeting of the World Muslim Brotherhood?

*A.* When I was in Mecca the last time, such a conference was in session. I did not get an invitation to attend until very late but I did attend. This year, too, if I am invited, I shall consider attending.

*Q.* You were a student at Aligarh Muslim University, I believe. What are your views about the recent ordinances regarding the Muslim University? Do you think it would be good if the essentially Muslim character of the University was modified to a more secular one?

*A.* I cannot say with any certainty whether such an ordinance would be in the interest of the University or not, for I have not studied the matter. But I can say one thing: the Muslim University has a character of its own, and it should not be vitiated by any restrictive measures. I feel that under the present circumstances, the Muslim character of the University should not only be preserved, but it should be afforded opportunities to expand, so that secularism may live.

If the Government of India's ordinances are meant to obviate the Muslims purpose and character of the University, then they must be condemned. I remember vividly that in the first convocation after independence, Maulana Abul Kalam Azad and Dr. Zakir Hussain had promised that there would be no interference by the government in the internal matters of the University, and its character should be preserved. These promises should be honored.

Russia is a country which does not believe in God; its communism is the antithesis of religion. In spite of this, the character and individuality of Muslim educational institutions in the Soviet Union has been preserved. I am surprised that this problem should arise in India!

*Q.* How do you explain or to what do you attribute your strong attachment to your religion?

*A.* There can be only two reasons for a man's staunch faith in his religion: one is his own nature, and the other is his environment. I am grateful to God that I am blessed with both. My older brother believed in regular prayer, and my mother was very particular about religious observances. She often talked to me about God and the Prophet's life, and my older brother took me to the mosque for prayers and insisted that I read the Quran.

For strong faith in religion, the most important factor is a child's environment. Since I was in a religious atmosphere as a child, religion became a part of my very nerves and tendons.

*Q.* Would you mind answering some personal questions—about your childhood and your family?

*A.* Not at all. All that I am is known to all. I was born in Srinagar on December 5, 1905. My father's name was Sheikh Mohammad Ibrahim and he traded in Kashmiri shawls, but I was hardly fifteen days old when he dies. My father had been married twice, and I was the son of his second wife. I was brought up by my mother and older brother, but, in all, we were six brothers and two sisters. My brothers are still dealing in Kashmiri shawls in Kashmir.

*Q.* What kind of education did you have?

*A.* I had my early education at the Government High School in Srinagar. Later I was admitted to the Islamia College in Lahore and from there I went to Aligarh Muslim University where I obtained my Master of Science degree. Actually, right from the very beginning I had a strong leaning toward Science, and I pursued this subject in college.

*Q.* What impressions do you have of your childhood?

*A.* Like other children, I was deeply influenced by my environment, and yet, I must have had a revolutionary spirit right from the beginning. I was given to deep thinking; most children are curious about things, but they soon forget what they have learned. I must have been an exception. I saw everything and every event with a penetrating eye and retentive memory. In this respect, I was different from other children. Any remarkable event left a deep impression on my mind. I was a quiet but strong-willed child.

*Q.* In what economic class would you rate your family as you were growing up?

*A.* I belonged to a middle-class family, which could neither be called rich nor poor. We were a joint family and lived under one roof.

*Q.* Is there a particular event in your childhood that still remains with you?

*A.* There are a number of incidents of my childhood that are fresh in my memory to this day. They have left a deep and abiding impression on my mind. When I am surrounded by old memories and I arrange my thoughts, I am reminded of my dear neighbor whose house was separated from ours only by a thin wall. He was older than I, but we were good friends. He was employed in my brother's shawl factory, so we had many things to bind us together. He was a gentle, self-respecting, and highly intelligent person, and I treasure his memory. One day when he did not report for work, I learned that he was ill—then three days later, he was dead. As I looked upon my friend's dead body, my eyes overflowed with tears. When I came to know the circumstances of his death, I was overwhelmed with grief and dissolved in tears.

I could not imagine that my dear gentle friend could be separated from me so quickly and so painfully. You see, he was indebted to a money-lender and unable to pay his debt. The money-lender went to his house often and abused him profusely each time. Ultimately, my friend could tolerate it no longer and started denying himself food in order to save money to repay the debt. While he provided rive for his brothers and sisters, he denied himself any sustaining food. Soon he was overtaken by a serious illness which undermined his vitality. He was consumed with work, but tuberculosis—galloping tuberculosis—finally claimed his life.

While I looked at my friend's face, I thought of the injustice prevailing in the world: some people have so much to eat and much to spare, while others have so little that they die of hunger. What an unsympathetic world we are living in!

My childhood was full of events that have left an indelible impression on my mind. These incidents not only helped to form my character but greatly stimulated my thinking as well. Now, here is an example: my older brother commanded a great deal of respect among Kashmiris, just like my father had before him. During my brother's youth, rationing was introduced in some parts of Kashmir. A Kashmiri Brahmin who was Rationing Inspector visited our locality in order to enforce rationing. All sorts of

people gathered around him out of curiosity, and my older brother was among them. He called for the head of the locality, and when the man approached, the Inspector slapped his face. Of course, it was common for a government officer to abuse and insult people in Kashmir to create an impression of authority—and usually the most respected and admired person in the area was the one to be heavily insulted.

When the head of the locality was thus ill-treated, my brother became very incensed and questioned the propriety of the Inspector's behavior. The Inspector, seeing that the situation might turn ugly, apologized and the matter ended there. But the incident led me to think about the lot of the poor people in Kashmir when the junior officials and local leaders were treated in such a fashion. It was incidents like these that stirred me to seek redress of tyranny and injustice.

*Q.* But when you were young—say in school—did you make any attempts to improve the conditions of the people you knew?

*A.* As a school student, I joined and started leading students' organizations. At Aligarh University, too, I took an active part in the activities of the students.

*Q.* What hobbies have you developed?

*A.* Gardening is one of my main hobbies, and I am fond of reading books. However, my greatest interest lies with the masses and their problems. I am interested in observing the lives of the common people, and it is my life's mission to uphold the cause of the down-trodden. I want to devote my entire life to the cause of the people.

*Q.* After completing your degree, which profession did you want to enter?

*A.* I had decided while I was still a student that I wanted to enter politics, but before doing so, I wanted to prepare myself thoroughly for the hard life of a politician. It became my firm conviction that my people have the right to live an honorable life, and until they achieved their freedom, I could not sit in peace. My mind had already reacted strongly against political conditions in Kashmir: Kashmiris were hated everywhere and looked upon as liars and cowards. The condition of Kashmiri laborers was the worst, as they had been very badly exploited. Whenever I think of their poverty, my blood boils. I want to bring about a revolution in the life of every Kashmiri—I want to change his/ her entire life. If I cannot do that, I shall prefer death for myself, because I feel it is better to die than to live in disgrace.

*Q.* And about your marriage? Can you tell us something about your wife?

*A.* I was married in 1932. My wife was a Muslim even before our marriage. Her father, Mr. Nedou, had embraced Islam and was running an exclusive hotel in Srinagar. His Islamic name was Sheikh Ahmed Hussain. One of his cousins had also embraced Islam and had married a Muslim lady. I have three sons and two daughters. My wife has always shared the joys, sorrows, and ups and downs of my life and has inspired me even in my most difficult days.

*Q.* What would you say is the present position of the Urdu language?

*A.* Firstly, the question of language should not be viewed from a religious angle. Language knows no barriers of religion or nation. Urdu must not be considered the language of Muslims alone—Muslims of other countries do not speak Urdu, and yet many non-Muslims of India do.

The British, following the policy of divide and rule, created a language problem here. As a direct consequence, Hindus called Urdu the language of the Muslims, and Muslims Hindi the language of the Hindus—and this is absolutely wrong. Abdur Rahim Khan-e-Khanan was a Hindi Poet. On the other hand, Daya Shankar Nasim wrote Urdu poetry all his life. If Urdu was the language of Muslims alone, Brij Narain Chakbast, Ratan Nath Sarshar, Prem Chand, Tej Bahadur Sapru, Raghupati Sahai Firaq, and Krishna Chandra would be writing in Hindi.

The case of Kashmir bears out my contention. Pali is spoken in a number of parts of Kashmir, and the Pali script is also used. Pali has its origin in Sanskrit. With the spread of the Buddhist religion, Pali came to Kashmir to the extent that Kashmiri Brahmins became renowned Persian scholars. Urdu became popular in Kashmir at the later stage, but Kashmir itself has no linguistic prejudices.

*Q.* Is it true that you do not call yourself an Indian citizenship?

*A.* From the constitutional point of view I have accepted the citizenship of India temporarily, but the final decision will be taken later. It is not a question of my citizenship alone, but that of fifty lakh Kashmiris. Being a Muslim, I should be a world citizen, because Islam is an international religion. A Muslim cannot be tied to boundaries. It is unfortunate that Muslims have divided themselves into Pathans, Mughals, Sayyids, and so on. Of course, in the past people took ancestral names for the sake of nomenclature. However, all Muslims are brothers and cannot be excluded from the circle of brotherhood.

It is not my purpose to confuse the question of citizenship. I only want to pull down the imaginary walls of hatred. I love every Indian; yet, to love India does not mean that Pakistan must be hated. My main mission is to bring India and Pakistan together, and my citizenship has no bearing on my mission. But if we, Kashmiris, for any reason accept the idea that we are Indian citizens, then there is no basis for our argument. Your labeling us as Indian citizens will not determine our citizenship. The world must also recognize Kashmiris as Indian citizens.

All sorts of suspicions and conjectures are formed about my citizenship. I say, for God's sake, give me more freedom and trust me. I will be the last man to jeopardize the honor and self-respect of India. The freedom of India is my freedom. But if you do not trust me and insist that I declare my citizenship, then I say call me a citizen of undivided India, including India and Pakistan.

*Q.* But do you regard India as your homeland?

*A.* This should prove the point: in 1965 when I was on pilgrimage to Mecca, Indian papers started writing very unfavorable things about me. Several Muslim countries offered me asylum, but I refused these offers and returned to India before the expiration date of my passport—but, of course, I was arrested then—which was no surprise to me.

But my record is clean in this respect. I have been labeled as Pakistan's enemy number one: when Pakistan tried to occupy Kashmir by force, I was the first man to lead the resistance against Pakistan. Give me more freedom—I shall not jeopardize the grandeur of India.

*Q.* In your opinion, is the Government of India sympathetic to the people of Kashmir?

*A.* Since 1953, I have felt that the people of Kashmir do not enjoy the confidence of Indian leaders. They are regarded with suspicion. The people of Kashmir do not ask for anything impossible: they only want protection from their elder brother, India. I am a friend of India, and to prove my contention, in a convention of Muslim countries, instead of supporting Pakistan on the question of minorities, I sided with India.

*Q.* Generally speaking, how do people react to your long and so far frustrating search for what you term "freedom" in Kashmir?

*A.* People taunt me about the way I am treated, my dreams of democracy, and my faith in constitutional government. I have no reply to these taunts,

but I still think I am right. I still have perseverance, and I have no hesitation in stating that in spite of the way I am treated, Hindus have affection for me. Was not Madan Lal a Hindu? And did he not give shelter to my family during my internment?

People warn me not to trust India, but until I am disillusioned, I will not heed their warning. I had talked at length to Mr. Jinnah on the two-nation theory, and I emphasized that until I am convinced of its wisdom, I would not agree with him. Mr. Jinnah replied that he was advising me in the capacity of a father, and that if I did not listen to him, I would regret my decision. I insisted that I would see my own conviction through. I believed then and I still do that fear and cowardice smother man's abilities. One must have and exhibit the courage of one's convictions.

*Q.* Do you accept Kashmir as an integral part of India?

*A.* We are, no doubt, a part of the undivided Indian subcontinent, which is the only correct geographical designation.

*Q.* Do you consider the Pakistani-occupied part of Kashmir an integral part of Pakistan?

*A.* No, by no means. The Pakistan-occupied part of Kashmir belongs to Kashmir and not to Pakistan. When I talk of Kashmir, I mean undivided Kashmir before 1947.

And my advice to the people of Pakistan-occupied Kashmir is that they should press Pakistan for the restoration of their rights, just as I am trying to restore the rights of the rest of the Kashmiris. And I reject out of hand the suggestion, which someone made recently, that the leaders of Pakistan-occupied Kashmir should get together with the leaders of Indian-occupied Kashmir.

My whole point is that the right of self-determination applies to Kashmiris on both sides of the Ceasefire Line, and until that right is granted by both India and Pakistan, justice cannot be done in Kashmir.

*Q.* Sheikh Sahib, it is felt by most Indians that Kashmiris in Kashmir have the same rights as Indians do in India. Is this correct?

*A.* I myself want Kashmiris to have the same rights as Indians, but the fact is that the democratic process stops somewhere near Pathankot. Between Pathankot and the Banihal Pass you find only a shadow of these rights, and after Banihal, you do not find even a semblance of them. Would you believe that in Kashmir our existence depends on the good or

bad behavior of petty police officials? Today Kashmiris say that if our leader, Sheikh Abdullah, could be imprisoned for fourteen years, how can we expect better treatment? We chose to develop good relations with India not because of her wealth, but because of our admiration for her democratic principles.

But instead of giving examples from Kashmir, I can cite my own example. Here they have freed me—but in the matter of expressing my opinion, I am restricted. Look at what happened this month in Meerut. The Chief Minister of Uttar Pradesh sent orders to all the District Magistrates saying that if my speeches caused a breach of peace, I should not be allowed to speak in public. The Chief Minister made no attempt to know who actually was behind the disturbances. I spoke at Meerut for two and a half hours, and in my speech, I only emphasized the need for communal harmony. Should the Chief Minister of a state in a democratic country adopt this attitude toward a free citizen? If this is your democracy, do you expect Kashmiri people to praise it? I agree that India can continue its hold on Kashmir on the basis of its armed strength, but you then have your hold on the bodies only—not the souls. This cannot be called true accession—accession can only be attained by trust and friendship.

*Q.* Kashmiris have been following your speeches and statements carefully since your release this month. Do you find any change in their opinions? Are they still keenly interested in your views?

*A.* I find that the great mass of Kashmiris favors my views, because they are so exasperated by dishonest leaders who toy with their interests and needs. Of course, there is a group of conspirators and agitators which instigates disturbances and tries to decry my efforts. And while this group certainly does not have influence over the whole of Kashmir or even much of India, news of their activities has spread in Kashmir and can be very harmful.

*Q.* Have you made any changes in your position since your release?

*A.* I am not rigid about my position. If anyone can convince me that my demands are injurious to the interests of the people of India, Pakistan, and Kashmir, I will be only too glad to modify them.

*Q.* Do you fear that you will be arrested again?

*A.* I don't know—only God knows. I have to do my duty, and as long as God wants me to remain free, I shall be free. I do my duty according to the will of God. I have strong faith that a person can do nothing unless God wills it, and to whatever place He sends me, I will go willingly.



*Q.* Of the three Prime Ministers, Nehru, Shashtri, and Indira Gandhi, which one have you preferred as Prime Minister?

*A.* How can I compare the three Prime Ministers? Indiraji is like a bud in the political field. I cannot and will not compare them.

*Q.* How are your personal relations with Mrs. Gandhi in comparison to your relations with her father?

*A.* Indiraji is the daughter of Pandit Nehru, and my personal relations with Pandit Nehru were deep and strong. She knows that, of course, but the position and influence that Pandit Nehru wielded are difficult for her to grasp in so short a time. Indiraji is like a bud—it will take time for her to mature. It is our duty to help her grow. Does she not have Nehru's blood running in her veins?

*Q.* When did you meet Mahatma Gandhi and Pandit Nehru for the first time? What were your initial impressions?

*A.* I met Pandit Nehru for the first time at the Lahore Railway Station after his visit with Mian Iftikharuddin Khan. He was setting out on a tour on the North West Frontier. It must have been 1937 or 1938. I talked to him at the railway station for a while and became so fascinated with him that I boarded his compartment and toured the whole of the North West Frontier with him.

During our tour, we exchanged ideas on all kinds of subjects of mutual interest. He suggested opening the Kashmir Muslim Conference to non-Muslims as well. When I expressed doubt about it, he explained that by opening the membership to all, my campaign against the ruler would gain more strength. Each time we met thereafter, our friendship grew stronger, but it was the first meeting that I remember most vividly.

When I first met Mahatma Gandhi, I judged him to be a leader of the highest ideals and very clear in his objectives. I was drawn to him by his honesty and his love of truth. He accepted his errors openly and never asked anyone to do something he himself would not do.

*Q.* I know you seek to improve relations between India and Pakistan—but do you think you can improve relations between India and China in any way?

*A.* India has friendly relations with all the countries of the world. Pakistan is our next door neighbor. So is China. When we can befriend the Soviet Union and the United States, why can't we befriend our next door neighbors?

*Q.* Can you tell me who the people behind the theft of the Prophet's hair were?

*A.* I cannot lay the responsibility on anyone, because I did not personally witness the incident. It would be a sin if I lay responsibility on someone on the basis of conjecture, but as far as I know, this is the story:

One night the sacred hair was declared stolen. Riots started immediately, and armed police were posted all around the sacred shrines. A wave of anger overtook the Muslims of Kashmir.

All of a sudden, there was an announcement that the sacred hair had been found, although no one saw anyone putting it back in its place. There is certainly something strange about the situation—no one knows who the thief was, what his motive was, or why he returned the sacred hair when he did. One can only guess who the culprit may have been since the government bungled badly in this case as in many other cases that it handled.

You see, in Kashmir there are two important centers: *Mujahid Manzil*, a political center which has now been destroyed, and *Hazrat Bal*, where the sacred hair of the Prophet is preserved. On the night of *Meraj Sharif*, lakhs of people gather there. At the time of *Milad-u-Nabi* as well, there is a large gathering. The birth anniversaries of the four Caliphs are also celebrated at this place. This area, then, has special importance to the Muslims of the Valley, and it is possible that there may have been a conspiracy to destroy it. After the retrieval of the sacred hair, Maulana Masoodi confirmed that the relic was authentic. Others also testified to its authenticity.

*Q.* What are your relations with Bakshi Ghulam Mohammad?

*A.* There is no point discussing my past relations with Bakshi Ghulam Mohammad. A man who works in the name of God has no time to think of personal ties. My relations with Bakshi Sahib are as good as with other people. There was a time when he was my closest colleague. However, his views changed, and he started decrying my policies.

It was only recently that Bakshi Ghulam Mohammad realized that perhaps my way of thinking was right. My victory lies in the fact that Bakshi Sahib now considers me to be the true deliverer of Kashmir.

*Q.* Is it true that you refused to meet some Kashmiri Brahmins who came to see you?

*A.* The news that was circulated was absolutely false! Why would I refuse to meet a person who comes to see me when I do not believe in taking

revenge on anyone? When I was in power as Prime Minister of Kashmir, I never took revenge against anyone. That was a time when my adversaries feared me, but when I discovered their fears, I called them and told them not to fear Abdullah. It has always been my practice to pardon my enemies.

*Q.* When you were President of the National Conference in Kashmir, how did you happen to become a member of the State Congress Party?

*A.* At one point, I decided to visit other states in India and chose Hyderabad for a visit, but I came away feeling that in Hyderabad, as in Kashmir, a great injustice was being done to the people by the ruler. In Kashmir, the ruler was a Hindu and the vast majority of the population was Muslim; while in Hyderabad, the ruler was a Muslim and the population was predominantly Hindu. In both cases, the rulers were not looking after the needs of the people. It was not a case of Hindu versus Muslim—but of the exploiter versus the exploited. In both cases, the masses needed care and concern. So, I decided to join the State Congress and become part of the national organization to help promote the interests of the people all over India.

*Q.* What was the purpose of Mr. Jinnah's visit to Kashmir in 1945?

*A.* Mr. Jinnah wanted me to transform the National Conference into the Muslim Conference—but I refused to do that. Generally, he felt that the right of accession lay with the ruler and not with the people of Kashmir, so you see that we disagreed on basic points.

*Q.* Do you really think it would be possible for India and Pakistan to establish good relations?

*A.* People tell me that Pakistan cannot be a friend of India's, because its very establishment is based on a hatred of India. I maintain that this is not so. India and Pakistan can be compared to brothers, who, after a misunderstanding, decided to partition their house. It was the duty of the Hindus of India to dispel the fears of minorities—it was on the basis of those fears that Pakistan was originally created. If we had treated the Muslims well and had restored their confidence, Pakistan would have realized its mistake and the wall of hatred between the two countries would have disintegrated. The Hindus must realize why Mr. Jinnah and other Muslim leaders adopted the course they did. Today when people ask me if this is the India of my dreams, I feel ashamed and cannot answer.

*Q.* But how can we bring about unity and cooperation between India and Pakistan?

*A.* To bring about unity and cooperation between India and Pakistan, the economic problems of both countries should be enumerated and tackled through trade agreements, by establishing travel facilities between the two countries and agreement on other relevant points. The two countries should shape their policies in a manner that will encourage these objectives and allow practical steps to be taken to implement them. Both countries will have to work with patience, mutual faith, and constant effort. If we do not act now to improve the situation, the next generation will never forgive us.

The peace agreement at Tashkent can be made meaningful only if some solid steps are taken now. The stumbling block between the two countries—on which the Security Council and the Soviet Union had to intervene—still exists. The Kashmir question must be settled once and for all before either country can live in peace and progress. (62–76)

*Q.* What about the necessity of establishing diplomatic relations between India and Pakistan?

*A.* It is regrettable that India and Pakistan have asked each other's representatives to leave. These things happen only when there is mutual distrust, and in this case, especially, it is very unfortunate.

*Q.* Will the expulsion of diplomatic representatives have any adverse effect on your visit to Pakistan?

*A.* No, it will have no adverse effect on my personal visit, but such developments will certainly affect the relations of the two countries adversely.

*Q.* Had you not been arrested in 1965, so you think that you could have averted the war between India and Pakistan?

*A.* I cannot claim that, but if I had not been in jail, I would have done my best to temper the conditions leading to the conflict.

*Q.* After your release from jail in 1964, you did make a serious attempt to establish good relations between India and Pakistan and to solve the Kashmir problem. What happened in Delhi when you visited Prime Minister Nehru in 1964?

*A.* I had been released from jail by the Sadiq government in Kashmir on the advice of the Government of India. Then Pandit Nehru invited me to come to Delhi in April 1964 and stay with him as his guest. After that long and cordial visit, I issued a statement upon my return to Kashmir:

On the cordial invitation of Prime Minister Nehru, I went to Delhi and had an opportunity to meet and exchange ideas with cabinet ministers and leaders of different shades of opinion, among them Acharya Bhave, Jai Prakash Narayan, and Rajagopalachari. I talked with the President and Vice President as well. After many days of meetings, I realized that all these leaders feel the necessity of establishing lasting and friendly relations between India and Pakistan. It is also generally agreed that for a permanent solution to the Kashmir question, the consensus of both India and Pakistan is necessary. The delay in settling the issue is hampering political, economic, and moral progress of the people of Kashmir. The clouds of maladministration and insecurity continue to hover over Kashmir.

The strained relations between India and Pakistan are a source of constant tension which sometimes takes the form of brute violence. The minorities of both nations live in an atmosphere of fear, uncomfortable in their own countries. If the tension between India and Pakistan is not checked and relations are not improved, there is the risk that a huge conflagration will erupt, disturbing the balance of power in Asia.

It is the duty of the leaders of both countries to prevent relations from deteriorating any further. They must find ways by which a lasting friendship may be established, and we have to concentrate all our energies to achieve this objective and to check any disruptive force. The solution which is ultimately found must satisfy India, Pakistan, and Kashmir. This is, of course, likely to take some time to achieve, especially when the leaders of Kashmir have not yet been consulted. We are now considering some possibilities, and it is hoped that a satisfactory solution will be forthcoming. Let us hope the press will cooperate with us in promoting an atmosphere of understanding and friendship. I hope too that I will be able to go to Pakistan to consult President Ayub Khan and other leaders on the settlement of some points which continue to create tension between India and Pakistan.

*Q.* What change did you find in Prime Minister Nehru during your visit with him in 1964?

*A.* A remarkable change had taken place in Prime Minister Nehru, and I found him a very different man. He had realized that there was a wide gap between the problems of the people, and his ability to solve them. When I met him last, he was greatly moved by the events in East Pakistan and the disturbances in Calcutta. He had begun to realize that he had little time left and that he would be leaving a lot of unsolved problems for his successors. He spoke to me very frankly and expressed his desire to resolve the Kashmir problem. I tried to help, but Pandit Nehru died suddenly, and his work remained unfinished.

*Q.* What was the purpose of your visit to President Ayub Khan in 1964? Was it to solve the Kashmir problem, or to resolve other differences between India and Pakistan, and thus to create a favorable atmosphere for future talks?

*A.* The purpose of my visit was mainly to find a solution to the Kashmir problem, as both Pandit Nehru and I agreed that good relations between India and Pakistan could also be settled. After my release in 1964, when I made efforts to tackle the problem, I found some change in the diplomatic atmosphere: President Ayub Khan did not consider India sincere.

I proposed to President Ayub that India and Pakistan should make a concerted effort to resolve their differences, but President Ayub said that he was not sure if Pandit Nehru would agree to act on a common solution. I assured him that Pandit Nehru was sincere and further reminded him that it was time that India and Pakistan went ahead with solving their problems in a brotherly spirit. I admit that at the time a way could not be found, but I am sure that if Pandit Nehru had lived, an honorable course would have opened.

*Q.* But the year after all these conciliatory talks the Indo-Pak conflict started—why?

*A.* The war erupted in 1965, because Pandit Nehru's solutions were not given a try, and the Kashmir problem became more and more involved? But I am sure that if I could have continued my efforts for a settlement, things would have turned out better.

*Q.* Do you think that President Ayub sincerely desired a solution to the Kashmir problem?

*A.* I talked to President Ayub in a frank and friendly way. I had nearly succeeded in my mission of convincing him of Pandit Nehru's sincerity and good intentions when Pandit Nehru's untimely death ended all discussions.

*Q.* Did Mr. Bhutto try to sabotage your talks with President Ayub in any way?

*A.* No. Mr. Bhutto did not interfere. He is young and spirited but less experienced than President Ayub. The difference between the two is mainly that of age and experience.

*Q.* What is your opinion of President Ayub's book, *Friends Not Masters*?

*A.* President Ayub, in his book, has expressed his personal opinion about many things. I agree in some cases, and disagree in others. He has written about me, but I feel that he misunderstood me. I later stated my views in clear terms so that the misunderstanding may be cleared up.

*Q.* Have you been in correspondence with President Ayub lately?

*A.* The day before the Pakistani High Commissioner, Mr. Arshad Hussain, was to leave, I paid a return visit to him and sent a message to President Ayub through him. I advised the President of Pakistan not to take any steps in the Security Council which might increase tension between the two countries, and which might adversely affect my own efforts to bring about amity between the two countries. I felt that it was acceptable for me to sound President Ayub out in the matter, because any discussion of these issues in the Security Council could only further complicate matters.

I deeply regret, however, that my message to President Ayub has been very badly misconstrued. It seems that the Pakistan High Commissioner added a few points himself. According to the High Commissioner, I never thanked President Ayub for supporting the right of self-determination of the Kashmiri masses. These are words added by the high commissioner, Mr. Arshad Hussain. Nonetheless, the message contained nothing objectionable.

*Q.* What is the future of Kashmir?

*A.* I have often been asked about the future of Kashmir. I see it in a very practical way. The country has already been partitioned, and partition is a reality. Kashmiris have to consider where their future lies. I want to adopt a course in which friendship between Kashmir and India will not lead to enmity between Kashmir and Pakistan and vice versa. I maintain that the final decision on the future of Kashmir will lie with the people of Kashmir. I would not like to be hurried into making a decision, and nor would they.

*Q.* But what type of solution do you want for the Kashmir problem?

*A.* I want India and Pakistan to develop friendly relations, and I want a solution to the Kashmir issue against that background. Such a solution must also be acceptable to the Kashmiri people themselves. You cannot build a strong house without digging the foundation deep enough; only a strong foundation can guarantee a durable building. You see, the problem rests on a few basic points:

One has to accept the fact that the Kashmir problem is the main issue responsible for the strained relations between India and Pakistan. The last war between India and Pakistan was fought on this issue, and the problem had to be referred to the United Nations. Both India and Pakistan claim Kashmir, but it must be realized that Kashmir belongs to neither India nor Pakistan, but to Kashmiris who reside in Kashmir. Kashmir is inhabited by fifty lakhs of people who have their own goals in life and can neither be owned nor bartered away by outside powers.

I understand the anxiety of India and Pakistan to have a foothold in Kashmir, but can the matter be settled only by having a strong desire to own Kashmir?

Kashmir is like a beautiful woman who has two suitors, each a neighbor and each anxious to marry her. Both are so love-stricken that they are willing to battle for her and, as a result, tension mounts in the neighborhood, and the woman herself is deeply affected. Her suitors seem to have no regard for her pitiful condition, even though they themselves suffer tremendously for her sake.

The people of Kashmir would like to have intimate relations with both suitors—India and Pakistan. But a woman cannot be a wife to two men at the same time. Kashmir is in the same position and is having trouble keeping the two suitors in a good mood.

Due to the strained relations between the two countries, there is a setback in the trade and commerce of Kashmir. This has an adverse effect on tourism, which should otherwise bring a lot of revenue to Kashmir. No capitalist wants to make a large investment in Kashmir because of the uncertainties of the future. I have considered the situation seriously as have Bakshi Ghulam Mohammad and Ghulam Sadiq, and they would probably agree that tension between India and Pakistan must be removed at the earliest.

Have you ever observed a fight between two elephants? The grass under their feet gets badly trampled. In this case, if the grass is to be preserved, you will have to bring about peace between the two neighbors.

Although India and Pakistan are neighbors having strong ties and depending upon each other for many things, there is no harmony. One looks toward the west, and the other looks toward the east, when they should look to a common place for mutual benefit. The economic problems of the two countries are interrelated: if the rivers of Pakistan are in spate, the rivers of India will also swell; if locusts invade Pakistan, they are bound to be a menace to India as well. The future of both countries lies in mutual cooperation and mutual assistance.

We have attained freedom, but instead of enjoying this freedom, both countries have become economic slaves to foreign powers. Tremendous sums of money are spent on armaments, but two years later the ammunition and armaments become obsolete—is that not a waste of national wealth? The defense budget of India a few years ago was only two hundred crores, but



now it is one thousand crores. The country is weak, economically and politically, and we depend on foreign capitalists for our economic development.

Our primary need is to supplant hatred and mistrust with friendship and confidence. India and Pakistan have been partitioned by drawing a line and the line has developed into a wall, but this wall should not separate our hearts. Mahatma Gandhi, Pandit Nehru, and Lal Bahadur Shastri earnestly desired amity between the two countries, and the Tashkent agreement is a shining example of the possibility of that friendship and cooperation.

You know, in these conflicts between India and Pakistan, thousands of people have been killed, thousands of women have become widows, and so many children orphans. The only son of a friend of mine, General Tara Singh, was killed in the last war. I felt that my own son had perished. The daughter of my friend, Tej Ram Kashmiri, was married only eight days before the war. The new husband was killed in the fighting, and I feel that my own daughter has been widowed. Thousands of examples can be cited of the numerous young men who have been lost in these senseless slaughters.

During the Second World War, we used to criticize the British for using our young men as cannon fodder. What are we ourselves doing today? Are we not sacrificing our best manpower to satisfy a power lust? I will not name them, but some statesmen do talk irresponsibly, and it is their inflammatory speeches that have caused thousands of such deaths.

There is no end to the atrocities of war. During my premiership of Kashmir, I rehabilitated a number of homeless, destitute people in Chhamb. I gave them shelter and employment, but after a few years, when they had just begun to stand on their feet, their homes were destroyed and they were again uprooted. Do you think I am not pained by these incidents?

There are so many people who shout war slogans! During Pandit Nehru's lifetime these slogans were ineffective, but soon after his death, war between India and Pakistan became inevitable. Neither country gained anything in the conflict. I had warned the slogan-mongers to weigh the consequences of war before resorting to it, and even now I say, let us work for an atmosphere of friendship and goodwill. I ask you, how can a person who raises slogans of war be a friend of either India or Pakistan?

You have asked me for a solution to the Kashmir problem. And my reply is that without determining the basis of the problem, you cannot arrive at a solution. As long as our hearts are not free of hatred and as long as we cannot gauge the consequences of conflict, the Kashmir conflict will not be solved. There must be a strong desire for a solution, and an honest attempt to know the needs and wishes of the other party. Let all those who sincerely desire for a solution sit in a round table discussion and come to terms. People ask me again and again for a practical solution to the problem, and I tell them repeatedly that good seed is not sown on fallow land. I have the precious seed with me, but you must show me suitable land for sowing. And you cannot raise a good crop by sitting in your drawing room. For practical results, you have to come out in the open field. We have failed so far, because we are trying to solve the problem as armchair politicians when a lot of plowing and practical work is needed.

This is not the time to discuss it, but I shall take a step forward and say that the matter can be settled through plebiscite, if there is a general agreement on it.

*Q.* But as far as you know, what kind of solution does India want?

*A.* After meeting with Acharya Kripalani, Jai Prakash Narain, and other leaders, I have arrived at the conclusion that the people of India in general want a constitutional solution to the Kashmir problem. But Jai Prakash Narain, at least, thinks that the most important thing is to satisfy Kashmiri masses.

*Q.* Would a round-table conference between the Prime Minister of India and the Chief Minister, Mr. Sadiq, be acceptable to you?

*A.* Mr. Sadiq had absolutely no following in Kashmir nor does he have an effective battalion of workers with him. However, a solution of the Kashmir problem acceptable to Kashmiri masses and people in general would influence Pakistan to accept it too.

*Q.* In your travels abroad, have you talked to any foreign leaders about the Kashmir problem?

*A.* While on my pilgrimage, I had the opportunity to meet and talk with some political leaders of Muslim countries of the Middle East. I also met some non-Muslim statesmen in London. All of them shared my feeling that India and Pakistan should establish friendly relations with each other. Gamel Abdul Nasser and King Faisal even went to the extent of saying that the strained relations of the two countries were harming the nations of the Middle East

I do not know if President Nasser actually offered himself as an arbitrator between India and Pakistan, but I know for certain that he earnestly wishes that the problem of Kashmir should be solved quickly. He is genuinely interested in the affairs of these two countries, and he appreciates the problems of newly independent nations.

Wherever I went, I found that world opinion is in favor of good relations and unity of purpose between India and Pakistan. Everyone strongly believes that the people of this area, Kashmir especially, cannot be denied their right of self-determination.

*Q.* There has been talk about the possibility of international control of Kashmir, which would include joint control by India and Pakistan, and Kashmir's right to govern herself independently in internal affairs. Do you subscribe to this policy?

*A.* No, I have not suggested such a plan. However, it is equally incorrect to suggest that I have said that Pakistan should have nothing to do with solving the Kashmir problem. Even complete freedom is not the proper solution, but when we sit together and discuss the matter openly and are prepared for mutual give and take, something will be forthcoming.

The leadership in India has shut itself in an enclosure. Only a plebiscite can force that leadership out of its shell and make India agree to a solution to the Kashmir problem.

*Q.* Do you think that any outside agency would be able to find a solution?

*A.* I have declared to the whole world that no one except the people of Kashmir have the right to decide the Kashmir question. The right of accession lies with the people of Kashmir and not with the ruler. We are not yet free from the dominating influence of the ruler, and we must be free to exercise our choice.

Kashmiris have been ill-treated and tyrannized by every ruler, whether Hindu, Muslim, or Dogra. They have humiliated Kashmiri women for their pleasure and usurped properties of Kashmiris for their own use. From the beginning of my political life, I have said, clearly, that Kashmiris would prefer death to a life of subjugation, dishonor, and humiliation. Until this day, Kashmiris have not been treated as human beings; and now that the time for self-determination has come, it is for Kashmiris to decide their own fate, and no outside agency can interfere.

*Q.* Would you like to become Chief Minister again?

*A.* No, because only that person who enjoys the confidence of the Government of India can be the Chief Minister of Kashmir. I am not in favor of complete independence for Kashmir, because Kashmir cannot defend itself.

You offer me the Chief Ministership of Kashmir. Some people have offered me the Prime Ministership of India, but these positions are not ends in themselves. Problems cannot be solved by accepting positions, but only by executing them.

*Q.* Do you still uphold the plan for a new Kashmir that you outlined while you were the leader of the National Conference of Kashmir?

*A.* To stop all exploitation of Kashmir in economic, political, and social spheres is the aim and objective of my plan for a new Kashmir, and I have full faith in the plan. A man would not like to desert his life's principles, would he?

*Q.* Would you be in favor of the partition of Jammu and Kashmir?

*A.* The Maharaja of Kashmir once had the idea of partitioning Jammu, but I told him he should first ascertain the feelings of the population before embarking on such a plan. The Muslim population of Jammu has decreased considerably as many were killed and quite a few migrated. There are hardly two thousand Muslims in Jammu now. Actually this part of the country from Kangra to Himachal Pradesh was inhabited predominantly by Dogras. From the point of view of trade and commerce, these areas are closely connected. In Kathua and Ranbirpora, there was a predominance of Muslims, but after the carnage, Muslims migrated. Now armies guard the boundary and trade. Commerce and traffic are at a standstill. I am saddened to see this state of affairs in Kashmir, and I sometimes search for the Kashmir of my dreams. Where shall I find it?

*Q.* You met with Mrs. Gandhi a few days ago (January 20), and the newspaper reports indicated that she is not willing to let you visit Pakistan again now as she feels the "climate" is not right for such a visit. What do you think about your talks with her?

*A.* Well, I was a bit disappointed, of course. The meeting was not very fruitful, although it lasted about two hours. I thought that Mrs. Gandhi would give the details of our talks when she met the press in the evening, but she was not very communicative to them—or to me during our meeting.

I am more worried about the possible solution of the Kashmir issue—more worried than I was before our meeting. I had hoped to get some clarification on the Prime Minister's points for negotiation, but she was reluctant to discuss the subject.

*Q.* Do you still want to go to Pakistan?

*A.* You see, a second visit to Pakistan depends on my finding that such a visit would be useful in some way.

*Q.* In your meetings with Mr. Arshad Hussain, the Pakistani High Commissioner, did you discuss your proposed visit to Pakistan?

*A.* I met Mr. Hussain twice, but I didn't talk with him about visiting Pakistan. Naturally, he will welcome my visit, and he has assured me that Pakistan will not take any steps which may further strain relations between India and Pakistan. I shall go to Pakistan only when I am convinced that I will be able to play a constructive role in bringing peace to the two countries. I would like to know the attitudes of the Indian government and its reaction to my proposed visit, for only if there is some basis of compromise, can my visit be worthwhile.

*Q.* Do you think that the people of Pakistan are looking forward to your visit?

*A.* Yes, and I want them to trust me fully. The suspicions which have grown about me in India must be put to rest. I fervently hope that a lasting friendship will develop between India and Pakistan and that India will begin to trust me as a friend. I know that I enjoyed the full confidence of Pandit Nehru—he was my strength, but that strength is no longer with me.

I certainly regret the attitude of some of my friends. When I left India, they carried on a nasty propaganda campaign against me. When I returned, without giving me an opportunity to explain myself, they arrested me and sent me two thousand miles away from Delhi.

*Q.* Would you give me the details of that arrest?

*A.* I had a legal passport and I went abroad on a pilgrimage, but during my absence, I was much maligned in India. When I returned, I was arrested at Palam Airport without the least opportunity to explain myself or my activities.

How tragic it is that the assassin of an august person like Gandhiji was given all the facilities of defense in various courts, but I was denied all opportunity to defend myself.

I was not even charged in a court of law. But still I do not complain. The Kashmir problem has become a matter of even greater concern. We have to reassure fifty lakhs of people in Jammu and Kashmir about their future. If you threaten then with an unacceptable solution, they will not yield. Trust me—trust my Kashmiri people, and let us work for a solution. My voice is the voice of truth and will not be suppressed. (Abdullah and Gundevia, *Testament*, 78–90)

**Sheikh Mohammad Abdullah was further questioned**, “In 1953 your relations with Nehru seemed to be strained. Could you give us the reason for that misunderstanding?”

Sheikh Mohammad Abdullah responded, “In India, there have been two trends of thought. Some people have always supported the idea of a secular State. Others have wanted to establish a Hindu State. The establishment of a Muslim State in Pakistan was a natural consequence of this second trend in India. Sardar Patel himself understood this matter, and, therefore, assured the Maharaja of Kashmir that he had full rights to accede to Pakistan if he wanted to. But the Maharaja never wanted to accede to Pakistan—or India for that matter. But when the Pakistan raiders invaded Kashmir, he proposed to accede to India, and India agreed to a temporary accession.

We, who were members of the National Conference of Kashmir, preferred to accede to India for several reasons. We thought that for the success of our economic plans and in light of the temperate political climate of India, we would be more successful as a part of India. Actually, after the leaving the Muslim Conference, I laid the foundation of the National Conference of Kashmir, because in my tours throughout the State, I found that the Hindus of Kashmir were as poor as their Muslim brothers.

The two economic plans of the National Conference were the abolition of *zamindars*, and the settlement of the debts of the peasantry. When we tried to carry out our program, some people opposed us. Our plan affected Hindu and Muslim capitalists and *zamindars* equally, but the Hindus had direct lines to Delhi. Both our measures were then labeled as anti-Hindu, and this was a most unfortunate development.

The peasants and poor classes of Kashmir had been laden with debts for centuries, and the machinations of capitalists had completely enslaved them. I established a special boon for settling these debts and, leaving

aside constitutional implications, decided upon a practical procedure to implement my policy. This was only an economic matter and had no political or communal strings attached. There were instances in Kashmir where a Muslim money-lender in comparison to a Hindu money-lender treated his fellow Muslims more harshly. My reform measures were so effective that some ministers of the Central Government praised my accomplishments. In a very short time, these debts and their interest were completely liquidated. The peasants of Kashmir are no longer in debt—but these measures were not generally appreciated by the Central Government, and a vicious conspiracy was organized against me.

I was in turn called a British agent, a communist agent, and an American agent. My enemies even undermined the loyalty that my associates had for me. I wanted to take action against these persons and asked for the permission of Pandit Nehru to do so—but instead of giving me permission to prosecute them, he dismissed me and interned me. It was indicated that a conspiracy had been hatched, and I had been involved in it.”

The Sheikh was then asked, “I understand that at the time you wanted Kashmir to accede to India only in matters of defense, foreign affairs, and communications. If such concessions had been made for Kashmir, would not other states have made the same demands?”

Sheikh Mohammad Abdullah, “Not necessarily. Under the constitution of India, after independence, these special rights were given to some rulers of some states in India for some time.

*Q.* Then wouldn’t the independent states have been a danger to the unity of India?

*A.* If these states could not present a danger to British India, how could they be a danger to independent India?

*Q.* But don’t you feel that after the departure of the British, circumstances changed considerably?

*A.* With the departure of the British, the biggest change was that the entire defense system came into the hands of the center, while during British rule, states had maintained their own armies for defense. I would say that all these Indian states without seceding from India could be independent. In the Soviet Union, states, if they like, can be independent of the center, but this right has seldom been exercised. It is the same with Puerto Rico and other states in the United States.

*Q.* But why did you claim special privileges for Kashmir? The relation of Kashmir to the center was just like the relation of the other states, and there should be nothing special about Kashmir.

*A.* What others do is their job. I am doing what I consider best for Kashmir and I am within my rights.

*Q.* But you insisted on those three items—defense, foreign affairs, and communications—as the only ones in which you would accede, while the other states accepted the accession instruments in total. Were you doing that because Kashmir was a Muslim majority state?

*A.* It should be the business of the former rulers of states to say why they stepped aside from power. Sardar Patel was a wonderful man to be able to bring the rulers of states around to his point of view and he appealed to them in the name of patriotism and the unity of the country. He even put pressures on them through the *Praja Mandras* of the states and they acceded to his request. (Abdullah and Gundevia, *Testament*, 37–39)

*Sheikh Mohammad Abdullah at the Event Organized by the Bar Association at Nedou's Hotel, Srinagar, on March 20, 1968:*

In the good old days, lawyers took an active interest in the affairs of their country. They were never found wanting in protecting the rights of common people when they were invaded by executive action—but, by and large, I do not find any awareness of this now among the lawyers of this State.

It is true that some lawyers have suffered as a result of the monstrous laws that have been enacted, but, generally speaking, the Bar as a whole has kept aloof from what is going on around them, even with regard to the administration of law and justice.

I am grateful to you for having invited me this afternoon, as it has afforded me an opportunity, for the first time after a long time, to meet you and talk with you.

We have passed through a severe winter when the necessities of life were found to be hopelessly in short supply. The political uneasiness has sapped the very foundations of the State, and if the members of the Bar feel that uneasiness too, then we have a common ground. In my view, the uneasiness that prevailed was due entirely to political instability. During the last two decades, the future of the State has hung in the balance.



The partitioning of the subcontinent has brought into being two independent states. The people of those two States have now accepted the partitioning as it affected them, and there is no uncertainty in their minds in regard to their future. But, in the entire subcontinent, Kashmir alone stood out as being the solitary State whose future still hangs in the balance.

Mere slogans will not remove the uncertainty and instability. Our grievance against India is that they are led by mere slogan-mongers, and they allow themselves to be misled by wrong representations. The fact of the matter is that our State continues to be an apple of discord between India and Pakistan, and a part of the State continues to be in the hands of one and another in the hands of the other, and their armies are standing in front of each other.

Therefore, the whole subcontinent has virtually become an armed camp, and if there is an actual confrontation between them, we might become the battlefield of that conflict between the two. If we have any genuine complaint to make in this respect and do so with the utmost goodwill, then our bonafides become suspect, and we are dubbed as Pakistani agents irrespective of the merits and demerits of what we say.

Indian democracy ceases beyond Pathankot, and the people of the State remain unaffected by it. There were general elections throughout India. The elections in the State of Jammu and Kashmir were also conducted by the Election Commission of India, but there was a marked difference between how the elections were conducted in India and here, and any hue and cry raised about their fraudulent character has fallen on deaf ears.

It is not enough to claim Kashmir as an integral part of India, like Bombay, etc. For 20 years, Kashmir has been a subject of dispute. I have been a part of the struggle, and I know how it started and through what stages it passed.

If it is claimed that Kashmir is no longer a dispute, then how is it that United Nations observers are still posted in the State and the Security Council is still seized of the matter, and Kashmir is discussed with any world leader who may visit India.

A negotiated settlement involves give and take—a compromise where neither party thinks that he has been worsted. A compromise cannot, in the very nature of things, be on your own terms alone but must be based on what is fair and right, given the will a compromise could be arrived at.

Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru was imbued, toward the end of his life, with such a desire, and we had started making efforts in that direction, but,

unfortunately, he soon passed away and the successor government in India reversed his policy and thought that the purpose could be better served by resorting to force. We, of course, said that was not the right approach.

Panditji had himself said that whatever laws the Indian Parliament would pass, if the people of the State did not themselves accept them, then they had no value. So, Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru had said that the ultimate sanction of any law passed by the Parliament as applicable to the State of Jammu and Kashmir must be acceptable to the people of the State. But our voice was not heard, and we were thrown into prison.

Then there was the 1965 conflict between India and Pakistan. It has been said that Pakistan sent infiltrators into the State, but when we sought an open dialogue with India, then we were apprehended and force was used in Kashmir. And when the other party realized that the door to negotiations had been barred, it took other steps.

One step led to another. There ensued a war between them, which spelled disaster for us.

It is true that this involved a loss of crores and billions to India, and thousands of their men were killed. But we also suffered in consequence. Chumb was destroyed; the inhabitants of Poonch and Rajouri were uprooted.

India claimed that Pakistan was no party to the dispute over Jammu and Kashmir. If Pakistan was not a party, then why was Haji Pir returned to Pakistan when it was claimed to be a part of Indian territory?

When we joined India in 1947, we did so at a time when there was communal frenzy raging throughout the subcontinent, and we thought that India represented an ideal. There was the voice of Gandhiji beckoning us, and we believed that, in spite of the temporary aberrations, Hindus, Muslims, and others would unite. And, because of their ideals, we thought that there would be rule of law, a democracy where the exploitation of man by man would cease on the ground of religion, and that they would be guided by the teachings of Gandhi and Nehru, as we believed in those ideals.

We, therefore, extended our hand of friendship to India, and we demonstrated by action our faith in our ideals, and we threw in our lot with India. But what image of democracy and what rule of law did India project on the minds of the people of the State? You must search your hearts to find the answer.

If we joined India, it was not because we were tempted by its wealth, but because we thought that our aspirations for freedom and democracy would find fulfillment. We, therefore, had an agreement with India, and if

we turned our face from Pakistan at that time, the reason was that it did not recognize then our right to be the arbiters of our own fate.

Pakistan then claimed our State as their own on the ground that the majority of the people here were Musulmans. But, we said that if you regard the Muslims of the State as your property, then there are ten lakhs of non-Muslims inhabiting the State, and the State is as much their home as that of the majority community.

We said that the people of the State, regardless of which community they belonged to, should have an opportunity to decide whether they should join the one country or the other, or remain independent. We also said that this decision should be taken by the people irrespective of their caste and creed, as there was no question of the Muslims dominating other sections of the community by reason of their numbers.

When the partition of the subcontinent took place, I was in jail, and when the negotiations about accession started, I made it clear that both India and Pakistan must accept the right of the people of the State to take this decision.

Both India and Pakistan were then in the grip of a communal holocaust, so we said that after they had settled down, we would be in a position to decide our own destiny, as it affected our future generations and was, therefore, a very crucial decision for us to take.

We needed time. But Pakistan said that the subcontinent had been divided on the basis of religion, and, therefore, all the majority Muslim areas should ipso facto become part of Pakistan and not of India.

In reply we said that British India had been partitioned and not the princely Indian states, and those Indian states had become independent because paramountcy had lapsed, and the suzerainty of monarchs had reverted to the people of the states and was not transferred to either of the two then dominions.

So, the princely states had become independent in law, and it was for them to decide what they should do about themselves.

India agreed with our viewpoint that it was the people of the State who had the right to decide this matter, and India helped us to safeguard this right. There was the technical difficulty that India could not send its army to Kashmir unless Kashmir had acceded to India, because in that event, Pakistan would also be free to send its army there. At that time, both their armies were under the control of British officials, and, therefore, India had to devise a method whereby it could legally send its forces to the State, and this led to the accession, but the accession was subject to a referendum of the people of the State.

Mr. V. P. Menon, in his book on the integration of the states, has made this matter clear, and when the case went to the Security Council, India stated that they had no territorial ambitions in Kashmir, and that it was a provisional accession subject to a plebiscite.

And it was Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru who made that position known throughout the world and who made it clear that Kashmiris could not be treated as mere chattel—that they were not a piece of property which could be bartered away to one or the other. His speeches are there for you to see; they form part of the world record and are enshrined in the official records of debates of the Indian Parliament. That stand was continued right up to 1957. In 1953, as you know, there was a coup d'état, and I was arrested. Following that, the two Prime Ministers of India and Pakistan met and said clearly in a communiqué, which was issued at the conclusion of their meeting, that the matter would be decided by a plebiscite.

We stood by the stand that India itself took, and when India took the matter to the Security Council, Pakistan also fell in line with that view, and world opinion also veered round to it. Then there were resolutions passed by the United Nations to the same effect, so this became a commitment not only on the part of India and Pakistan, but on the part of the whole world as well, that the future decision on the disposition of the State of Jammu and Kashmir would be made by the people themselves through a plebiscite conducted under United Nations auspices. This was followed by other steps in that direction.

A “cease-fire came into operation, and there was a truce agreement. The matter hung on for one reason or another until India proclaimed that the world situation had changed, and, therefore, they would go back on their pledge to the people of the State of Jammu and Kashmir to hold a plebiscite in the State. The reason advanced for this change was that Pakistan had joined SEATO and CENTO.

We ask now—why were we to be penalized because of some acts of omission and commission on the part of Pakistan, and that the commitment that had been made affected us, the people of the State of Jammu and Kashmir, and there was no reason we should lose our rights flowing from such commitment, no matter what mistakes Pakistan may have committed.

Thereafter, they tried to get a resolution passed by the Constituent Assembly of the State ratifying the accession. This was not the correct thing to do. India had stated in the Security Council that the Constituent Assembly of the State was not competent to decide this issue of accession.

That should have been the end of the matter, but instead I was asked to circumvent this assurance by a back door method. How could I do that with all the sense of responsibility I possessed? What would a leader be worth if his word was found to be untrustworthy? India is a world power and has a world position to maintain, and if they go back like this on their pledged word, then they would lose that position, and that is a big price to pay.

The matter did not make any headway, and so were thrown into jails. The matter hung on, but the real dispute continues so long as the cease-fire line remains. So long as the two armies stand face-to-face with each other, a small ant may be crushed between them. But if they are friends, then we too might survive.

Therefore, it is a vested interest with us, the people of Kashmir, that India and Pakistan should become friends, apart from the fact that it is also vital for their own progress.

India and Pakistan have come to their present plight, because they are spreading huge amounts on rearming themselves for fear of each other, and are seeking aid from both America and Russia. Their whole attention is thus diverted, and their whole foreign policy revolves around this question of Kashmir.

They have lost the very independent position which they had. India is economically in the doldrums, and although Pakistan's position in that respect is not quite so bad, it is also suffering a great loss.

India and Pakistan have many common problems, which they could meet unitedly. There are also many common projects, which they could jointly undertake. But the main thing is that they should be able to resolve their differences.

Pakistan is without coal, which they could get from their next door neighbor, India. Likewise, India has no jute, which it could obtain from Pakistan. Their commerce ministers lament the heavy toll this confrontation on the economic front is taking, and, therefore, it is in their interests that they settle this matter. It is in our vital interests also that they should do so, as that would remove the uncertainty and uneasiness that prevails here.

When the two countries become friends, then the tension ceases. Those people who promote this tension between them can never be true friends.

Whether we are Pakistanis or Indians, we are backward in many respects, and we only think emotionally. As emotion appeals to common people the most, we arouse their emotions.

If this dispute did not exist, and we resorted to a normal life, then we would not have the present lot of people as our ministers. As long as the tension continues, this state of affairs will continue and such men will dominate the scene, because it is with the help of such people that they are able to carry on, because they will do things at their behest.

But all this harms the common person, and its ill-effects are felt by all concerned. Nor can any person with a clean conscience be reconciled to it.

Both the countries must realize that they must give up this possessive attitude and accept the fact that it is the 50 lakh people living here to whom the State belongs. We are a part of the subcontinent, and in the welfare of India and Pakistan lies our welfare.

We have shared the joys and sorrows of the subcontinent, and, therefore, we approach this problem as brothers and sisters and which solution would be acceptable to all, the matter can be resolved.

A strong leadership is called for to deal with this problem, which is not just my problem, but everyone's problem. I was in jail for fourteen long years. Bakshi Ghulam Mohammad was at the helm of affairs for ten years and spent of rupees. He had proclaimed from the mountain tops that Kashmir was an integral part of India, and now Mr. Sadiq is saying the same thing.

Were they able to ensure stability during the twelve long years when I was out of the picture? And were they able to provide peace and prosperity to the people? I believe we are within our rights in asking for such peace. (*Speeches and Interviews*, 61–70)

## Concluding Remarks

I have said this at several forums and I reiterate that at this time there is a genuine fear that the lack of leadership in J & K has created an abyss that has caused an unredeemable political bankruptcy in the State, and regional aspirations continue to be asphyxiated by the politics of the Indian and Pakistani nation-states. I have been distressingly aware of the atrocities inevitably inflicted on idealism, particularly by nation-states that, by their nature, do not brook opposition, which I concretized in *The Life of a Kashmiri Woman*. As Kashmir has been witnessing for a long time, structures of governance might change, legal discourse might change, but it is armed might that bestows authority on nation-states, giving them the legitimacy to wage wars and to annihilate peoples in the wake of those wars.

I observed in my book *Islam, Women and Violence in Kashmir: Between India and Pakistan* that the Simla Agreement, ratified in 1972 by then Pakistani Prime Minister Zulfikar Ali Bhutto and Indian Prime Minister Indira Gandhi soon after the 1971 war, gave legitimacy to the bilateral nature of the Kashmir issue; entrenched the cease-fire line between Indian-administered Kashmir and Pakistani-administered Kashmir, thereafter referred to as the Line of Control (LOC); validated the UN charter as governing relations between the two countries; and agreed to reaching a final settlement of the disputed area in the former princely state of J & K. The common perception in India was that by ratifying the Simla Agreement, Pakistan had tacitly acknowledged the Indian Union's claim

over the State. This perception in politically influential circles in India and Pakistan seemed to give a much yearned after legitimacy to India's centrist policies. Democracy, however, promises curative treatment as opposed to mere palliative treatment, and citizens continue to hope for the restoration of self-determination, rule of law, a solution-oriented revival of internal political dialogue, negotiations, and, in this day and age, accommodation of diverse ideological and political leanings identities within a secularist framework, creating new openings for people, including the young, to discuss public issues and become active participants. The aim of that process should be the repair of the frayed ethnic fabric in all parts of the State.

I have emphasized in my various publications in academic and popular forums that insisting on the rigidity of one's stance which doesn't allow political accommodation encourages the malignant uncertainty which helps in the institutionalization of corruption, and opportunists make hay while the unpredictability remains unresolved. The increasing political paralysis helps the nation-states of India and Pakistan to maintain the status quo, which works in the interests of some of the actors, state as well as non-state, on both sides of the LOC.

In trying to espouse antiestablishment positions, some of us tend to ignore the dangers of obscurantism and the growth of a conflict economy, in which some state as well as non-state actors are heavily invested. The espousal of violence as the means to redress political injustice and socio-economic inequities will not bring the ship into harbor. Violence has always been a Frankenstein monster that ends up destroying those who rationalize and romanticize it. Our political predecessors in Kashmir, who carefully and deliberately separated politics and religion and whose ideology has been undermined by the powers that be, were wise.

My oft-repeated observation, for which I have received flak from certain quarters, is that India and Pakistan have been using Kashmir as a bargaining chip. A lot of Kashmiris raise the slogan of self-determination or plebiscite with sincerity, but for a lot of people in Kashmir—military officials, political actors, mainstream as well as separatists, bureaucrats, and also military and bureaucratic officials in India and Pakistan—the slogan of self-determination or plebiscite has simply become rhetorical.

There are times when India gets belligerent and categorically tells Pakistan that it needs to vacate the portion of Kashmir that it holds; that it needs to demilitarize the portion of Kashmir which it holds and ensure human rights and liberties to Kashmiris on its side of the border. Pakistan responds just as aggressively and screams itself hoarse about the Kashmiri



people's right of self-determination, and then both countries, whenever there is a spell of camaraderie, put the plight of J & K on the back burner.

There is a lack of sincerity and political will on both sides of the border to resolve the issue. One of the biggest challenges to the evolution of indigenous politics that exists within Indian-administered Kashmir as well as Pakistani-administered Kashmir is that in order to gain legitimacy any political actor must enjoy the support and blessings of the establishment. So a political actor, particularly a mainstream one, in order to be successful in J & K, requires the patronage of the Government of India. Separatist politicians in J & K would require the patronage of the Government of Pakistan and the military of Pakistan. In the Kashmir on the Pakistani side, no political actor is eligible to run for office unless he or she enjoys the patronage of the Pakistani military and the deep state or high-level elements within the intelligence services.

The depoliticization of the indigenous political space and the criminalization of dissident politics on both sides of the border are particularly troubling and have led to the brutalization of Kashmiri society. When excesses, whether they are military, or religious, or political, are not curbed, they have terrible long-term damaging effects. And when religion and politics are conflated, mass movements suffer from a lack of clarity and cannot be integrated with the resuscitation of progressive politics. As I pointed out in one of my radio interviews, the onus lies on those who claim to lead the political movement for autonomy and self-determination in Kashmir to separate religion and politics and to present this movement in a more ecumenical form which world activists would like to take forward, without any allegation being leveled against them, because in this day and age fundamentalisms are rearing their ugly heads the world over. In the wake of 9/11, the world has become increasingly polarized, and there is a carefully constructed divide between "us" and "them," between the "civilized world" and the "barbaric world."

In the Indian subcontinent civil society activism has its limitations. I reiterate that the translation of a political and social vision into reality requires an efficacious administrative setup and vibrant educational institutions, which produce dynamic citizens while remaining aware of the exigencies of the present. As I underlined in an article of mine, which was published in Indian and Pakistani national newspapers, a political movement that pays insufficient attention to the emergence of peace, political liberty, socioeconomic reconstruction, egalitarian democratization, good governance, and resuscitating democratic institutions ends up leaving

irreparable destruction in its wake. A mainstream movement or a militant nationalist movement that lacks such a vision becomes hamstrung and feckless. Such a movement must have the foresight to pay attention to whether the legislation and execution of political, economic, and social policies and programs in contemporary Kashmir is successfully addressing women's as well as men's experiences and concerns. Religious and political rhetoric remains simply rhetorical without a stable and representative government. The electoral process and the establishment of a government are not ultimate goals in themselves, but shouldn't be criminalized either, because they are the means to nation-building and societal reconstruction. The redress of wider political, socioeconomic, and democratic issues in Kashmir requires reconceptualizing the relationship between political actors and civil society actors. There is a large section of the populace of J & K that is still ecumenical, a large section of the populace that would still veer away from the forces of radicalization or any kind of monocultural identity.

Consequently, it is my heartfelt conviction that the political logic of autonomy in J & K was necessitated by the need to bring about socioeconomic transformations, and so needs to be retained in its original form within a political and cultural framework that is amenable to positive and constructive outside influences.

APPENDIX 1: STEERING COMMITTEE RESOLUTION  
AS ADOPTED BY THE 2ND PLENARY SESSION  
OF THE J & K STATE PEOPLE'S CONVENTION,  
8TH–13TH JUNE, 1970

“Whereas after having heard the various papers and speeches delivered by the delegates, on the issue of the State’s political future, the Jammu and Kashmir State’s political future, the Jammu and Kashmir State people’s Convention instructed the Steering Committee, by its resolution dated 17-10-69, to tabulate the presented material for submission to, and discussion in the 2nd session of the convention .... (Document ‘A’).

Whereas, thereupon, the Steering Committee in their meeting of 17-12-68, appointed a sub-committee for purpose of tabulating the said material, complete in every respect,

And accordingly the Sub-Committee submitted its report to the Steering Committee of the Jammu and Kashmir State People’s Convention (Document ‘B’).

The Steering Committee, after consideration of the various proposals regarding the internal constitutional set-up of the State, laid down the broad guidelines defining the regions of the State of Jammu and Kashmir and broad character of the internal constitutional set-up of the State in their meeting held on 13th and 14th May, 1969, and

Appointed a sub-committee to set out the broad outlines of the draft Constitution, including the measure of devolution of power and functions in favor of various tiers.

And whereas, pursuant thereto, the Sub-Committee submitted a draft dated 23-10-69 broadly defining the regions, units, and other tiers, and

indicating generally the nature and character of powers, responsibilities, and duties assignable to the various tiers.

And the Steering committee after deep consideration of the Sub-Committee's said draft on internal constitutional set-up of the State, approved the same with some alterations (Document 'C').

And now, therefore, in pursuance of the further implementation of the 17th October, 1968, Convention Resolution, the Steering Committee commends the Documents 'B' and 'C' to the 2nd Plenary Session of the J & K State People's Convention for its approval.

The Steering Committee further requests the delegates of the Convention to guide, through expression of free views and concrete proposals, the Committee in the task of evolving a formula for a peaceful, democratic, just, lasting, and realistic solution of the State's political future, keeping in view the interests of all its regions, as also the fact that such a solution should strengthen the secular democratic forces, that is to say such forces that stand for equal rights to members of all religions and other persuasions, and should foster communal harmony, not only within the State of Jammu and Kashmir, but also in the subcontinent and should be in conformity with past traditions and abiding values of our freedom movement."

## APPENDIX II (DOCUMENT B): EVALUATION REPORT BY THE SUB-COMMITTEE

### PREAMBLE

In its meeting held on 7 December 1968, in Srinagar, the Steering Committee decided to appoint a sub-committee consisting of us three (Mirza Afzal Beg, Balraj Puri, and Prem Nath Bazaz) for the purpose of scrutinizing the tabulation work done by members of the Steering Committee with regard to the papers submitted to and the speeches made in the first session of the Jammu and Kashmir State People's Convention. We were further instructed to prepare a summary of all the proposals and suggestions which had been made by the delegates to the Convention and submit the same by the end of January 1969.

As the material did not reach us in time and certain unavoidable circumstances intervened, this report could not be submitted earlier.

We closely studied in our three meetings the report on the papers and speeches as also the comments of the Steering Committee on them. We drafted the report and finalized it on 17th February.

In framing our report, we have, as far as possible, avoided repetitions and tries that every original proposal or suggestion is included in the summary. We, therefore, hope that every participant will find his view substantially stated though at times these may have been split into parts under different heads.

Despite our best efforts to classify the proposals, certain suggestions put under one head could have found place under another head also. This is so because some of the suggestions can fit in at two or more places, but to avoid repetitions, we had to include them under one head only.

## PROPOSALS AND SUGGESTIONS

We have found that the proposals and suggestions made by the delegates regarding the political future of the State broadly fall under the following heads:

- (a) Settlement through a plebiscite; (b) Accession to India;
- (c) Accession to Pakistan; (d) Independence for the State;
- (e) Interim arrangement with final solution after a specific period;
- (f) Some other methods of solving the problem.

We shall now state the various proposals and suggestions under these heads serially.

### *(a) Settlement Through a Plebiscite*

It has been stressed that the political future of Jammu and Kashmir State should be finally decided by the democratic method of a fair and free plebiscite. To this solution, the following conditions have been set by way of explanation or amplification:

1. Pressure should be brought to bear on the U. N. to get its resolutions implemented by India and Pakistan.
2. The plebiscite should be held in accordance with the resolutions adopted by the Security Council on the issue.
3. The plebiscite should be held not only for the alternative of accession to India or Pakistan but also with the third choice to keep the State independent.
4. While generally overall plebiscite for the entire State is demanded, zonal plebiscite is also suggested, zones being as follows:
  - (i) Azad Kashmir; (ii) Kashmir Valley; (iii) Doda; (iv) Rajouri; (v) Poonch; (vi) Askardu; (vii) Kargil; (viii) Gilgit; (ix) Astor; (x) Boonji and, (i) Udhampur; (ii) Jammu; (iii) Reasi (excluding Rajouri); (iv) Kathua (v) Ladakh

5. The pre-requisites of the plebiscite suggested are as follows:
- (i) Withdrawal of Indian and Pakistan troops from all parts of the State;
  - (ii) Replacement of outside troops by State troops;
  - (iii) Defense against foreign aggression to be the joint responsibility of India and Pakistan under U. N. auspices;
  - (iv) Resettlement of displaced persons on either side of the cease-fire line;
  - (v) Restoration of traffic and trade on Srinagar-Rawalpindi Road;
  - (vi) Free elections to Jammu and Kashmir Assembly, and formation of a representative government to conduct the internal administration;
  - (vii) Holding of a round table conference of all political parties for settling details of the plebiscite;
  - (viii) Meetings of the leaders of India, Pakistan, and Kashmir to be held by rotation in the three places to create a friendly atmosphere before the plebiscite is held;
  - (ix) the two parts of the State to be reunited before the plebiscite is held;
  - (x) UN should hold charge of the State for five or ten years prior to the plebiscite;
  - (xi) A federal type of government comprising three units: Kashmir, Jammu, and Frontier *illaqas* be set up in the State;
  - (xii) While exercising the right of vote in a plebiscite, the State's people should take note of the emotions of millions living in the subcontinent.
6. For the supervision of the plebiscite the following suggestions are made:
- (i) It should be held under UN auspices;
  - (ii) It should be supervised by two administrators, each from Ceylon, Burma, Afghanistan, Indonesia, Egypt, Abyssinia, and Kenya;
  - (iii) It should be held under the directions of a supreme council with the composition of the following members:
- |                         |   |
|-------------------------|---|
| a) U. N. O.             | 1 |
| b) India                | 1 |
| c) Pakistan             | 1 |
| d) Kashmir Valley       | 3 |
| e) Azad Kashmir         | 3 |
| f) Jammu Hills          | 1 |
| g) Jammu Plains         | 2 |
| h) Northern territories | 1 |
| i) Ladakh               | 1 |

7. After accession through the plebiscite and before transferring the sovereignty of the State to India or Pakistan, as the case may be, the UN should secure the guarantee from the concerned power that the autonomy of the State shall be fully preserved.

*(b) Accession to India*

It is proposed that the present relationship of the State with India should continue forever with the following provisions:

1. The Cease-fire line be made the permanent border of Jammu and Kashmir State.
2. Special position guaranteed to the State under Article 370 of the Indian Constitution should continue.
3. Autonomy of the State restored to the 1947 position, changes in Article 370 after 1953b cancelled; jurisdiction of the Election Commission, Supreme Court, and grant of fundamental rights (in so far as they do not affect progressive measures like land reform and debt legislation) should not be affected by it.
4. Largest measure of autonomy should be guaranteed.
5. A truly representative government should decide the measure of autonomy.
6. The content of autonomy should be acceptable to the State Muslims.
7. A solution within the framework of the Indian Constitution wherein the people of the State, who are mostly Muslims, would be able to maintain their own cultural, linguistic, and religious entity.
8. Both India and Pakistan should bind themselves by a covenant regarding the inviolability of autonomy in their respective areas.
9. Firm assurance to be sought from the Indian leadership that it shall allow Kashmir to pursue its social, economic, and political goals according to the genius of her people. Possibilities of the fulfillment of the ideals enshrined in New Kashmir to be explored. If guaranteed to this effect from India are not forthcoming, a determined battle to be launched.
10. Full assertion of Kashmir's personality within the Indian Federal system and democratization of the State's set up to be tried through participation in elections at all levels.



11. The State should enjoy power and authority to enter into reciprocal trade arrangements with authorities in Pakistan within the broad framework of the trade policies of the Indian Union.
12. The pledges given by the leaders of Kashmir and India during the early years of mutual relationship should be re-affirmed.

*(c) Accession to Pakistan*

Proposals have been made favoring the State's accession to Pakistan, but, at the same time, such accession is subject to a plebiscite with options to accede to India, Pakistan, or to remain independent.

*(d) Independence for the State*

It has been proposed that the State of Jammu and Kashmir should become independent. The following suggestions have been made in connection with this proposal:

1. A Federal Independent Republican State should be formed with six semi-autonomous units, namely,
  - a) The Valley
  - b) Azad Kashmir
  - c) Jammu Plains
  - d) Jammu Hills
  - e) Northern Territories
  - f) Ladakh

Excepting the Valley, each unit will have a right of secession from the State and accession to either India or Pakistan. The Valley should have to vote on accession only if after 10 or 20 years of UN supervision, it rejects independence in a plebiscite.

2. Independent Kashmir should comprise all parts of the State, exactly as it existed prior to partition in 1947.
3. The State comprising three units, namely Jammu, the Kashmir Valley, and Ladakh, should become independent.
4. A Federal Independent State should be set up with three units, namely Jammu, Kashmir Valley, and Ladakh.

*(e) Interim Arrangements with Final Solution After a Specified Period*

Proposals have been made to postpone the final settlement of the problem to some future date, and, in the meantime, we have made some suggestions to run the State administration:

1. UN supervision has been suggested for varying periods—5, 10, or 20 years—as an interim measure.
2. For defense during the interim period, State troops or militia should be employed, or, alternatively, defense should be the joint responsibility of India and Pakistan. One delegate had suggested that we have an army comprising 2,000 each personnel from Ceylon, Burma, Afghanistan, Indonesia, Egypt, Abyssinia, and Kenya for the purpose.
3. For internal administration, convening of a National Constituent Assembly elected freely and fairly, which will form a representative government.
4. Such subjects as defense, elections, judiciary, public services, economic development, audit and currency should be the joint responsibility of India and Pakistan. The State will not enter into any agreement with one country which would adversely affect the other country. Further, agitation in the subcontinent against the Constitution of the State or against the Constitution of the two countries should be considered as treason.
5. Full autonomy within existing constitutional framework be granted till a congenial atmosphere is created for a final settlement of the accession dispute.
6. All Indian laws extended to the State since 1953 should be withdrawn.
7. Status quo should be maintained for five years, and Sheikh Abdullah should be provided facilities to tour India and Pakistan during the period at the end of which a plebiscite will be held to decide the issue further.
8. Regional autonomy for Jammu, Kashmir, and Ladakh should be granted to create an organic, composite, and harmonious personality of the State before attempting to decide the question of overall status.

*(f) Some Other Methods of Solving the Problem*

Some of the proposals made for the final solution do not fall under any of the above categories and should, therefore, be grouped together as follows:

1. A round-table conference of representatives from India, Pakistan, and Kashmir should be convened to thrash out de novo the issue and evolve a solution.
2. Status quo should be maintained for five years, and Sheikh Abdullah, accompanied by two representatives each from Jammu, Kashmir, and Ladakh, should be allowed to tour the two countries, meet the leaders there, and evolve a solution to the problem.
3. Elections to the State legislature should be held under neutral auspices to pave the way for resolving the dispute.
4. The leaders returned to the State legislature through a fair and free election should sit at a round-table and start a purposeful talk with India and Pakistan for settling the dispute.
5. A struggle should be launched to get the right of self-determination for the State people conceded by India and Pakistan. Thereafter, a convention of leaders from both sides of the cease-fire line should be held to evolve a solution.
6. The present Legislative Assembly should be dissolved and President's rule imposed on the State. Thereafter, a democratic government should be established in the State which would create an atmosphere conducive to the final resolution of the dispute.
7. A series of conferences, conventions, and meetings should be held with delegates from India and Pakistan with the purpose of creating a congenial atmosphere for a settlement. Meanwhile, fullest autonomy should be granted to the State by India.
8. A Constituent Assembly should be convened to establish a representative government for Jammu and Kashmir State. The government will enter into treaty relations first with India and afterwards with Pakistan.
9. India and Pakistan should be persuaded to resolve their differences over the future affiliations of Kashmir to the satisfaction of the State people.
10. The leaders of India and Pakistan should arrive at a settlement on the basis of the pledges given to each other in 1947. This should be followed by negotiations with India (including Kashmir) and Pakistan for a final settlement of the dispute.

11. Independence of the whole State with joint control of (India and Pakistan) of foreign affairs and defense.
12. Dixon plan with independence for the plebiscite area.

Submitted

SD/-

1. Mirza Afzal Beg
2. Balraj Puri
3. Prem Nath Bazaz

PS.

Nos. 11 and 12

Added with permission of other members

Sd/-

Mirza Afzal Beg

## APPENDIX III (DOCUMENT ‘C’): INTERNAL CONSTITUTIONAL SET-UP (BROAD OUTLINES)

1. There should be a Head of State whose nomenclature and functions should be set out in the Constitution.
2. Provision should be made for an independent judiciary as a limb of the State.
3. Subject to the future status of the State to be evolved, all powers and authority shall vest in the State, except those delegated to lower tiers in accordance with provisions contained in the Constitution.
4. Maximum powers and functions that may gradually be assigned to the various tiers functioning under the State may only be listed, but, at the present moment, only such of the said powers and functions shall actually be exercisable by the respective authorities as would be manageable by the constituent concerned. This area of powers and functions may be expanded from time to time, as experience is gained.
5. The law making power of the unit legislatures shall be limited to framing legislation on subjects delegated to them in accordance with the principle laid down in the Constitution. They shall also perform executive and supervisory functions in their respective jurisdictions.
6. The unit legislatures shall be called Councils.

## 1. AT THE STATE LEVEL

The State shall comprise all those territories that were included in it before August, 1947.

- a) The State shall be represented by its chosen representatives, elected on the basis of adult franchise.
- b) Provision shall be made for special representation of backward communities and classes.
- c) There shall be an Upper House at the State level comprising an equal number of members from the three units.

The House will exercise non-legislative powers and will be of a wholly advisory character to deliberate over and make recommendations for the preservation of security, integrity, and inter-regional harmony of Jammu and Kashmir State.

- d) The State government shall function as a cabinet on the basis of collective responsibility.

## 2. AT THE UNIT LEVEL

The State of Jammu and Kashmir is to consist of three administrative units, viz., (a) Kashmir; (b) Jammu; (c) Frontier *Illaqas*, which shall comprise the following zones:

### *Kashmir Unit*

- a) Kashmir Unit shall comprise the province of Kashmir.
- b) The zones of Kashmir Unit shall comprise broadly the present districts of the province, subject to minor adjustments and keeping in view common language and cultural affinity of the people.

### *Jammu Unit*

- a) The Unit of Jammu shall comprise the province of Jammu.
- b) The zones of Jammu Unit shall broadly comprise the present districts of the province, subject to minor adjustments of areas on the basis of common language and cultural affinity of the people.

### *Frontier Unit*

- a) The Unit of the Frontier *Illaga* shall comprise the following zones: Gilgit, Skardo, and Ladakh.  
The boundaries of the zones shall be subject to adjustments keeping in view the common language and cultural affinity of the people.
- b) Each unit shall have a council comprising such number of elected members as may be determined in relation to a unit of population.
- c) Provision for special representation for backward communities and classes should be made.
- d) For the Frontier Unit, on account of its much smaller population and wider area than the other units, the unit of population for determining a constituency shall be smaller.
- e) The Executive Council in each unit shall be responsible to the Unit Council on the basis of collective responsibility.
- f) Maximum number of Executive Councilors should be fixed in the Constitution.
- g) Legislative powers at Unit level shall be limited to the subjects transferred to the Unit.

### *At the Zone Level*

1. Each unit shall comprise zones roughly co-extensive with the present administrative districts in the State.
2. A district committee shall be set up for each zone consisting of not less than 11 and not more than 21 members, to be appointed as follows:
  - a) Two-thirds to be elected by local self-governing bodies or blocks.
  - b) One-third to be elected by direct vote.
  - c) Suitable representation to be provided for women and backward classes.

### *Functions*

1. A district committee shall be a coordinating body exercising general supervisory powers over working or block committees.
2. It may be given executive functions for the establishment or maintenance of schools at high level.  
Its functions may also include:

- a) Advice and supervision of execution of developmental works, approval of the budget of Block Committees. Distribution and allotment of funds among the Blocks.
- b) Consolidation of Block plans.
- c) General supervision of the activities of Block Committees.
- d) Matters relating to the development of agriculture, animal husbandry, preservation of forests, social welfare, secondary education, public health, protection of State property, minor irrigation works, local industries, matters relating to cooperatives, community development, etc.
- e) The sources of finance of District Committees will be mainly grants from the government, loans from the government, and small cesses.

#### *At the Block Level*

1. Each District shall be divided into Blocks, coextensive with the present administrative tehsils.
2. For each Block, there shall be a Block Committee consisting of not less than 7 and not more than 11 members to be appointed as follows:
  - a) One-third to be elected by direct vote on the basis of adult franchise.
  - b) One-third to be elected by *Panchayats* in the area.
  - c) One-third to be nominated for special representation for women and backward classes.
  - d) Government may associate from time to time technical experts in order to advise Block Committees requiring such knowledge. Such persons shall participate in the meetings of the Committee, but shall have no vote.

#### *Functions*

Block Committees may be entrusted with

- a) Developmental functions of their own or on behalf of higher bodies.
- b) Preparation of development plans for the Block.
- c) Management of primary education, health, sanitation, small means of communication, and local irrigation.
- d) Supervision over *Panchayats*.
- e) Scrutiny of *Panchayat* budgets.



*Finance*

The source of finance of the Block Committee shall be the following:

- a) A share earmarked from the District Committee budget.
- b) A share from the land revenue allotted by the government.
- c) Grants and loans from the unit government.
- d) Levy of small cesses, such as water rates, etc.

AT THE *PANCHAYAT* LEVEL

- a) For such number of villages as may be prescribed, a *Panchayat* Committee shall be set up, which shall comprise not less than 7 and not more than 11 members to be elected by the adult population in the *Panchayat* area.
- b) As far as possible, election to the *Panchayat* shall be by secret ballot.

*Functions*

The following functions may be assigned to a *Panchayat*:

- a) Municipal administration, cultural matters, social, and developmental activities.
- b) Matters relating to sanitation and promotion of crop yields.
- c) Promotion of cottage industries.
- d) Registration of births and deaths.
- e) Agency functions on behalf of higher tiers or organs of the State.
- f) Collection of land revenue.

*Finance*

The sources of finance of the *Panchayat* shall be as follows:

- a) Allotment of funds from District or Block revenues.
- b) Cesses.
- c) Small taxes on vehicles and professions.
- d) A levy on social functions approved by the unit.
- e) Loans or financial aid from higher tiers of the State.
- f) A levy on bazars and fairs.

APPENDIX IV: FOUNDER OF THE BHARATIYA  
JANA SANGH (BJP) SHYAMA PRASAD  
MOOKHERJEE'S CORRESPONDENCE  
WITH JAWAHARLAL NEHRU, FIRST PRIME  
MINISTER OF INDIA, JANUARY 9, 1953,  
AND SHEIKH MOHAMMAD ABDULLAH,  
PRIME MINISTER OF JAMMU AND KASHMIR,  
FEBRUARY 4, 1953

“The Praja Parishad rightly puts a pertinent question. If the ultimate accession of the State to India continues to be undecided and if decision will have to be based on a general plebiscite of the people, what will be the fate of Jammu in case the majority of the people, consisting of Moslems, vote against India? A general plebiscite on a highly controversial issue, which may easily give rise to communal passions, especially on account of Pakistani propaganda, is not at all a safe criterion for knowing the real will of the people. ... The other question relates to the extent of accession of the State of Jammu and Kashmir with India. No doubt Article 370 lays down that apart from defence, foreign affairs, and communications, accession with regards to other matters will be determined with the previous consent of the Government of Jammu and Kashmir. As you will remember, this is a temporary provision and Shree Gopalaswamy Ayyangar who had moved the adoption of the Article had clearly indicated that this was so and that it was the hope and wish of everybody concerned that the State of Jammu and Kashmir would finally accede to India just as other States had done. ... The provision for an elected President or a separate flag has to be looked at from the point

of view of those who honestly feel that this may be destructive of the political unity of India which it must be the duty of every State and citizen to maintain at any cost.”

In his reply to Mookherjee, Jawaharlal Nehru wrote on January 10, 1953,

“Surely it does not require any proof to substantiate the fact that violence on a widespread scale has been indulged in by the Praja Parishad people. The fact that a large number of officers and policemen have been injured and damage done to public buildings, is adequate proof of violence. What happens in Jammu is not a local matter. It has the largest implications on the whole Kashmir issue, on the future of the Jammu and Kashmir State, on Pakistan, on the U. N. etc. The question has to be viewed in that larger context. To me it seems perfectly clear that the Jammu agitation, if it succeeded, would ruin our entire case relating to the State. ... the case of Jammu and Kashmir cannot be considered in exactly the same light as other States in India. ... it is not some kind of legal decision or change in the Constitution that will finally settle this question of the State. There are other factors that are at play, including international factors. Foreign policy does not just mirror our wishes, nor is it a mere exhibition of temper.”

Sheikh Mohammad Abdullah in his reply to Syama Prasad Mookerjee on February 4, 1953, says,

“You have referred to the legitimate demands of the Praja Parishad and have pleaded that they should be accepted. Before I touch this aspect we might pertinently examine the attitude of the Parishad to the question of accession itself. There is conclusive evidence to show that the Praja Parishad is determined to force a solution of the entire Kashmir issue on communal lines. Its leaders have expressed their views publicly to this effect ....

... Let me mention here that there seems to be a fundamental difference of approach to the Kashmir problem between various political parties in India. You refer to the Kashmir question being a national question. This would naturally presuppose a uniformity in the viewpoints of different parties in India. But, unfortunately, much ill-informed and contradictory comment has been offered in regard to the position of the State. Not only is there lack of unanimity in regard to the objective but also in the methods suggested for achieving it. This adds to the obscurity of the issue nationally as well as internationally.

It is the legitimate right of every Indian to understand properly the Kashmir problem. But when such understanding becomes vitiated, it natu-

rally warps judgment. I understand that the Jan Sangh has secured the cooperation of Master Tara Singh, the Akali leader. It is interesting to know what Masterji has to say about Kashmir. In his speech at Lucknow, he is reported to have said, 'Kashmir belonged to Pakistan. It is a Muslim State. But I claim it in lieu of the property that the refugees have left in West Pakistan.'

Once the ranks of the State's people are divided, any solution can be foisted on them. ... While agreeing that the balance in the State should not be disturbed, you, at the same time, plead for the acceptance of the demand of the Praja Parishad for the complete merger of Jammu irrespective of what happens to the rest of the State. You even believe that this course would compel Pakistan to give up its claim finally. ... We cannot ignore that the activities of the Praja Parishad, which you justify, are meanwhile working as a dangerous influence against the unity and integrity of the State. ... I do not know how the present constitutional position of the State can be adjusted with a demand for merger. Whatever has been done by the Government here is strictly in conformity with the Indian Constitution. And yet you speak about this position in a manner which suggests that we have been flouting the Constitution. It is painful for me to note that even a person of your eminence should have been carried away by an emotional slogan like *ek pradhan, ek bidhan, ek nishan* (February 4, 1953). By virtue of the State's accession and its constitutional relationship with India, all these symbols are supreme as much in our State as in any other. If internally there have been some variations in the policies of the State Government, it is precisely because the right has specifically been conceded to the State by the Indian Constitution. This arrangement has not been arrived at now but as early as 1949 when you happened to be a part of the Government.

When talking about the constitutional aspect, it is sometimes conveniently forgotten that the Praja Parishad wants that Article 370 should be expunged from the Constitution. So far as we are concerned, we have maintained that the special position accorded to the State can alone be the source of a growing unity and closer association between the State and India. The Constituent Assembly of India took note of the special circumstances obtaining in the State and made provisions accordingly.

To entertain the doubt that the Muslims of Kashmir would now give up their secular ideals would be uncharitable, although the statements and the pronouncements made by the leaders of communal parties in India from time to time and the inspiration and guidance they are providing at the moment to the Praja Parishad leadership in Jammu is, no doubt, giving them a rude shock. But let me assure you and the people of India that the Muslims in Kashmir will not falter from their ideals even if they are left alone in this great battle for secularism and human brotherhood."

## APPENDIX V: EXTRACTS FROM SHEIKH MOHAMMAD ABDULLAH'S SPEECHES

### AGAINST AUTOCRACY AND AGGRESSION: AS "QUIT KASHMIR" PRISONER

"Oppressed by the extreme poverty and lack of freedom and opportunity of the people of Jammu and Kashmir State, I and my colleagues of the Jammu and Kashmir National Conference, many of whom are behind prison bars or in exile today, have humbly sought to serve them during the past sixteen years. We have endeavored to give faithful expression to the growing consciousness among the people of their imprescriptible rights, aspirations, and desire for freedom. This has attracted the penal and preventive provisions of law. Where law is not based on the will of the people, it can lend itself to the suppression of their aspirations. Such law has no moral validity even though it may be enforced for a while. There is a law higher than that, the law that represents the people's will and secures their well-being, and there is a tribunal of human conscience, which judges the rulers and the ruled alike by standards which do not change by the arbitrary will of the most powerful. To that Law I gladly submit and that tribunal I shall face with confidence and without fear, leaving it to history and posterity to pronounce their verdict on the claims I and my colleagues have made not merely on behalf of the four million people of Jammu and Kashmir but also of the ninety-three million people of all the states of India. That claim has not been confined to the people of any particular

race, or religion, or color. It applies to all, for I hold that humanity as a whole is indivisible by such barriers and human rights must always prevail.

The fundamental rights of all men and women to live and act as free beings, to make laws and fashion their political, social, and economic fabric, so that they may advance the cause of human freedom and progress, are inherent and cannot be denied though they may be suppressed for a while. I hold that sovereignty resides in all people, all relationships political, social, and economic derive authority from the collective will of the people.

It is a small matter whether I am imprisoned and tried and convicted. But it is no small matter that the people of Jammu and Kashmir suffer poverty, humiliation, and degradation. It has been no small matter what they have endured during the violent repression and horror of the past two months and more, and what they are enduring now. These very events have demonstrated the justice of our demand and of our cry "Quit Kashmir." For a system of Government that can subsist only by pursuing such methods stands condemned. If my imprisonment and that of my colleagues' serves the cause to which we have dedicated ourselves, then it will be well with us and we shall take pride in thus serving our people and the land of our forefathers.

Kashmir is dear to us because of its beauty and its past traditions which are common to all who inhabit this land. But it is the future that calls to us and for which we labor, a future that will be the common heritage of all, and in which we as free men and women, linked organically with the rest of India, will build the New Kashmir of our dreams. Then only shall we be worthy of the land we dwell in" (quoted in Bedi and Bedi, 17-19).

AS KASHMIR PREMIER, ADDRESSING THE OFFICIALS AND PUBLIC  
REPRESENTATIVES ON HIS SWEARING-IN CEREMONY AS THE FIRST  
POPULAR PRIME MINISTER

"We shall reckon communalism and its propagation as a serious offence. We will not tolerate an outlook which makes a distinction between one community and another. My aim is to provide equal opportunity to all. The poor will not be denied advancement merely on account of the fact that poverty is a social disability" (ibid. 19).

ADDRESSING AN AUDIENCE, WHICH HAD COLLECTED TO GREET  
SHEIKH MOHAMMAD ABDULLAH, ON THE FIRST DAY OF HIS VISIT  
TO THE GOVERNMENT CENTRAL SECRETARIAT, SRINAGAR,  
AS PRIME MINISTER

“You are guiding not only the destiny of the forty lakhs of people living in the State, but you are today the beacon light for the whole of India. Even that great saint—Mahatma Gandhi—repeatedly stated this. Men of the eminence of Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru have very often praised you for the wisdom you have shown in keeping yourselves free from the evil influence of communalism which swept the Punjab and other parts of India. They have not said this to please you. They have said this because it is true” (ibid. 19).

TO THE PEOPLE IN THE WAR-TORN TOWN OF URI

“While we have only heard of the atrocities committed by the raiders, you have been their victims. The raiders say that they came here to support the Muslims against Dogra autocracy. They used it as an excuse to loot and destroy our villages and commit atrocities on the people. It is known to you that when the people of Kashmir, particularly the down-trodden, were in the midst of a bitter struggle against autocracy, Pakistan leaders never thought it worthwhile to come to the aid of the Musalmans of the State. Instead they gave moral support to the machinery which was crushing them. And yet they claim to be the supporters of the Muslims of the State: A true Muslim is one who has no ill-will toward others. In view of their unIslamic deeds, the raiders have brought a slur on the fair name of Islam” (ibid. 20–21).

OUR CONVICTIONS AND IDEOLOGY

“Our war is not a war of territory. We cast no covetous eye on other’s territory. This war is for vindication of high principles. It is a war between hatred and love, between truth and untruth. We will wage it to the last drop of our blood” (ibid. 21).

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