1 Meanings of Freedom in the Princely State of Jammu and Kashmir

Come, gardener! Create the glory of spring!
Make flowers bloom and bulbuls sing—create such haunts!

Who will set you free, captive bird?
Crying in your cage, forge with your own hands
The instruments of your deliverance.

Wealth and pride and comfort, luxury and authority,
Kingship and governance—all these are yours!
Wake up, sleeper, and know these as yours.

Bid good-bye to your dulcet strains. To rouse
this habitat of flowers, create a storm,
Let thunder rumble,—let there be an earthquake!

—Ghulam Ahmad Mahjoor, "Come Gardener"[1]

In the early twentieth century rumblings of resistance against the despotic Dogra rulers of the princely state of Jammu and Kashmir gained momentum, and Kashmiris sought to alter the social injustices and economic inequities that defined their lives. New dreams, new aspirations, and new self-consciousness signaled an awakening, a rejection of subjugation and a deep desire to seek out freedom. This chapter explores Kashmiri imaginings of freedom in this historical context. Poetry, pamphlets, and literary works reveal how Kashmiris adapted pre-existing themes of freedom to fit the needs of their deteriorating economic and political landscape. While politicians and intellectuals made speeches, edited and wrote for newspapers and magazines, and organized study circles where discussion often spilled over into activism, Kashmiri poets profoundly affected by the revolutionary fervor of the 1940s wrote inspiring poems to spark courage and resilience in Kashmiris fighting for their rights. In constructing ideas about freedom, politicians and poets alike liberally borrowed from the ancient texts and mystical culture of Kashmir,

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but also remained open to new international ideas that could, they felt, improve human relationships and lay foundations for a strong society. Despite some shared culture and interests, however, I further argue that the definition of "freedom" was not universally constant; in the changing socioeconomic context of the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, Kashmir's social divisions and religious differences added complexities to this discourse.

In fact, broader regional relationships fueled Kashmiri narratives of "freedom," which were articulated not only by those within the princely state, but also by expatriates who had migrated to the plains of Punjab to escape poverty while retaining an emotional attachment to their homeland. In the early twentieth century, a new generation of educated, politically minded young Kashmiris, exposed to Western ideologies of nationalism, secularism, and socialism, adapted these concepts to fit the regional environment of the Valley. Their application of international discourses to the question of Kashmiri emancipation altered the feudal structures of the state, sharpening class conflicts and exposing social divisions. Ultimately, the political processes underway in the rest of the subcontinent informed the visions that inhabitants of Jammu and Kashmir had for their political future, especially in the critical decade before partition. While at the time of decolonization certain regions and sub-sections of the culturally diverse princely state identified with one or the other of the emerging political constructs of "India" and "Pakistan," others, including the critical figure of the maharaja, remained ambivalent about the future status of their princely state. Understanding the roots of the conflict that continues to wrack Kashmir today, I argue, requires understanding how Kashmiris' conflicting desires, developed in the decades before partition, left an open space in which the new nation-states could intervene, appropriating Kashmiri aspirations to suit their own political agendas.

"Freedom" from the Structures of the State in the Nineteenth and Twentieth Centuries

The concept of "freedom" has fascinated Kashmiris and dominated their sociopolitical discourses for centuries. The geographies, histories, and ethical treatises of pre-colonial Kashmir are replete with notions of freedom. Kalhana's *Rajatarangini*, or "River of Kings," believed by orientalist scholars to be the earliest recorded history of the Indian subcontinent, doubled as a treatise on efficient, ethical, and moral governance. The twelfth-century text sketches a picture of a good king: a man who ensures social peace, encourages agricultural productivity, and governs wisely, creating a harmonious society leading individuals

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toward freedom from injustice, ignorance, and selfishness.[2] Inspired by Buddhist philosophy, *Rajatarangini* compares the good ruler with a *bodhisattva*, endowed with piety and compassion to render service to humanity. The ideal king would consider justice and truth a part of his *dharma*, and set an example for others with his personal conduct.

The mystical traditions of Kashmir were infused with these concepts of ethics, humanism, and brotherhood; in a stratified society struggling against class and caste hierarchies, they attracted the disenfranchised. The first mystic poet of the Kashmir Valley, Laleshwari, popularly known as Lal Ded or Lalla, articulated a humanistic discourse intermeshing ethics and religious belief, and projected a universal vision of a good society. She exhorted rulers to endorse ethical behavior and end social disparities:

> I renounced fraud, untruth, and deceit;
> I taught my mind to see the one in all my fellow-men,
> How could I then discriminate between man and man,
> And not accept the food offered to me by brother man?[3]

The indigenous Muslim mystics of the fourteenth century, the Rishis, explained emancipation as a struggle to attain good social relations, end economic injustice, and understand all human beings as creations of God. The Rishis captured Kashmiris' imagination, making Islam comprehensible to ordinary people in ethical terms, as we can see in one of the verses of Sheikh Noor-ud-Din (or Nund Rishi), the patron saint of the Kashmir Valley. Noor-ud-Din defines the true Muslim as one who values the principle of righteousness:

> One who does not neglect one's daily duties,
> Who longs to live by the sweat of one's brow,
> Who controls the bestial anger of one's mind, who shows fortitude in provocation,
> May truly be called a Muslim.
> He will be among the people of paradise
> Who shares meal with the hungry,
> (who) is obsessed with the idea of removing hunger,
> Who humbly bows (in prayers) in all sincerity,
> Who scorns anger, greed, illusion, arrogance and self-conceit,
> May truly be called a Muslim.[4]

The Rishis defined "freedom" as an end to the exploitative character of Kashmiri society, which divided the rich from the poor and separated high and

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low castes. In their verses, they asked the rich to fulfill their social responsibilities and allow the less privileged to achieve a comfortable existence. These imaginings of freedom, transmitted from one generation to another via poetry and folklore, defined the way Kashmiris perceived emancipation by the early twentieth century: as a combination of personal and sociopolitical transformations.

Kashmiri aspirations for spiritual, economic, and political freedom were not much different from those of people across the globe; however, these ideas held special relevance in Kashmir due to a centuries-long pattern of repressive colonial dynasties. Afghans, Sikhs, and finally the British-supported Dogra Raj all prioritized high taxation over efficient governance to maintain their domination. Eighteenth- and nineteenth-century regional narratives and European travelogues alike document heart-wrenching stories of injustice and persecution which kept Kashmiris in constant terror. During his travels to Kashmir in the early nineteenth century, for example, the French naturalist Victor Jacquemont lamented the lack of value placed on human life in the poverty-stricken state. Jacquemont described the ruthlessness of the Afghan governors who employed collective punishments to create fear in people's hearts; their favorite tools of oppression included hanging political dissenters in public, then leaving their tortured bodies on display.[5] Other European travelers corroborated such stories of injustice, which continued after the Sikh conquest of 1819.[6] British explorer William Moorcroft exposed the disproportionate revenue demand that impoverished Kashmiri villages under Sikh rule. He described in detail the "ghastly picture of poverty and starvation" in "half deserted villages" as "wretched Kashmiris" struggled to survive under a regime that "looked upon [them] a little better than cattle."[7] As policies imposed by ruthless empires reduced ordinary Kashmiris to servitude, the ideas of "justice," "equity," and "truth" articulated by local saints and mystics under the banner of spiritual "freedom" provided hope that an oppressive society could be transformed.

In the late nineteenth century, regional political transformations ushered Kashmir into the "modern" era, creating conditions that ultimately resulted in Kashmiris' political mobilization in favor of "freedom." The Kashmir Valley became a part of the princely state of Jammu and Kashmir after the British East India Company put together several culturally diverse regions, taken from the Sikh kingdom of Punjab, and handed them over to Gulab Singh, a Dogra chieftain from Jammu, as a reward for his services during the Anglo-Sikh wars of 1846.[8] The Treaty of Amritsar transferred Kashmir and its surrounding areas to "Maharaja Gulab Singh and the male heirs of his body" for seventy-five thousand (Nanakshahee) rupees. Regional narratives later called this treaty a "sale-deed" that set a Hindu ruling house over the area without consideration for the wishes or interests of the vast majority of its people, who were Muslim.

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In pre-colonial times, South Asian ruling dynasties had always prioritized their own religious communities, yet they never excluded public patronage of other communities, institutions, or places of worship. This patronage allowed them to retain legitimacy among religiously diverse subjects. Mridu Rai asserts the newly created Dogra maharajas, however, inaugurated a "territorially bound Hindu sovereignty," supporting only Hindu temples and neglecting the maintenance of Muslim shrines and mosques. [9] In some instances, Muslim religious places became storehouses for grains and ammunition, causing deep resentment. Furthermore, newly promulgated laws permitted Muslim converts to Hinduism to retain rights over their ancestral property and the guardianship of their children, while denying the same privileges to Hindu converts to Islam.[10]

Kashmiri Muslim alienation did not only stem from religious discrimination, however; unequal socioeconomic structures ensured the dominance of the ruling elite and created further discontent among the majority. While hierarchical social divisions already existed within Kashmiri society, the Dogra state created a new group of landed elites, mostly Hindus, who had land bestowed on them as compensation for both real and imaginary services rendered. This newly landed elite had exclusive rights over, and few obligations to, the mostly Muslim families who actually cultivated the land. Even though they were allotted only a certain amount of revenue from land grants, they exercised jurisdictional rights and could evict tenants at will, forcing the peasantry into complete submission.[11]

Lack of accountability encouraged Hindu revenue officials to use *begar*, or forced labor, a long-standing hierarchical Kashmiri institution of exploitation and expropriation, to compel peasants to perform various tasks for the state without compensation.[12] Some peasants avoided this degrading practice by bribing officials with gifts and money, while others sold their lands for a pittance to secure written exemption from all forms of forced labor.[13] Beyond forced labor, the peasantry was also exploited at harvest time, when their food grains were appropriated at half the original price. This practice subsidized urban populations like Srinagar's shawl weavers, whose product brought an approximate annual revenue of 600,000 rupees to the state.[14] Finally, the Muslim religious elite (*pir*s), especially shrine custodians, exerted their religious power to extract the remaining food grains and poultry left with the peasants for their personal consumption.[15] Traditional ties of obedience to these shrine custodians prevented an agrarian revolt, and the complicity of the Muslim elite with the Hindu bureaucracy ensured the continuing dominance of the upper classes.

Feeling powerless to alter this social system, the Kashmiri peasantry lamented the injustices which had befallen their community using culturally relevant forms

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of protest: folk theatre (*band-pathar*), satiric ballads (*ladisha*s), and folk tales (*kath*). Bands and balladeers roamed the countryside, performing and singing at fairs and festivals, using humor to heal and replace sorrow with thoughts of happier times. Every street play addressed the social injustices faced by Kashmiri peasantry. In most plots, the king summons revenue officials to redress the wrongs suffered by the peasant. The peasant voices his grievances, but the revenue officials silence him. The bitter ironic end result finds the revenue officials innocent, while the peasant is held guilty.[16] One of these plays, *Raza-Pathar*, depicted peasants' contempt for the corrupt bureaucracy; its main character is a revenue official, Sagwan, who demands honey as a bribe from a potter. Instead of bringing the honey, the potter offers a pot full of mud as a bribe. When open criticism of the political elites' moral laxity risked reprisal, Kashmiri poetry and folklore used humor as resistance, publicly ridiculing corrupt officials and exposing inefficient governance while maintaining plausible deniability.[17]

Kashmiri misery was heightened by the natural calamities, including famines and epidemics, that engulfed the province periodically during the nineteenth and twentieth centuries. The unaccountable Dogra state's indifference to providing adequate relief to the victims of these unforeseen tragedies often led to starvation and death. A Kashmiri *ladisha*, or satiric ballad, sketched the pathos of the situation in these words:

> Oh dear, give a patient hearing to my woes!
> Famines and extreme poverty have made our lives miserable.
> The people who had little in store died mercilessly
> Even the wealthy traders were searching for a grain of rice.
> The hoarders were demanding exorbitant prices for a little handful of rice.
> Famines and extreme poverty have made our lives miserable.[18]

During the famine of 1877–8, the authorities set all grain apart for urban areas, leaving the agrarian population without food during the winter. The starving peasanty died in large numbers, but even the urban population (preserved at the cost of the cultivators) began to feel the pressure as the famine increased in severity in 1878. Storehouses which sold rice to the urban population at fixed rates remained closed for weeks; only the elites maintained access.[19]

The state's inability to provide adequate relief in this crisis forced the Dogra ruler to abolish the *rahdari* system, which had issued permits to subjects who wished to travel outside the state, allowing thousands of Kashmiris to leave their homeland to seek a better life. According to the 1891 Punjab census report, an extensive migration from princely Jammu and Kashmir led to 111,775 Kashmiri

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Muslims resettling in the towns of Amritsar and Lahore in Punjab.[20] These migrants trudged through high mountain passes, risking their lives without adequate protection from the vagaries of weather, to seek a better future in the plains of India. Lacking language skills, they struggled in an unfamiliar environment, performing hard labor during the day and spending their nights in mosques, trying to save enough to return home and buy food for their families.[21] As these poor migrants lived on the margins in a foreign land, their host society looked down upon them, pejoratively labeling Kashmiris "cowards without dignity." With little understanding of the situation, these insults accused the migrants of lacking the courage to change their destinies and live respectably in their homeland.

Even European travelogues, while expressing more sympathy for Kashmiris, presented them as "mean spirited and inferior cowards." English missionary Arthur Brinckman wrote, for example, that "the poor Cashmere is like a mouse trying to drink milk with an army of cats in the same room with him. The Cashmere does everything slyly, lies constantly to save himself from oppression, from the suspicion of not having enough for himself and his family."[22] Other "sympathetic" reports, including one written by Settlement Commissioner Walter R. Lawrence, blamed inhuman living conditions in Kashmir on the peasantry's lack of initiative.[23] These widespread stereotypes created a sense of inferiority even among affluent Kashmiri families. Many migrant families preferred to "disown their Kashmiri origin or their long domicile in Kashmir" by calling themselves "Arabs, Turks, Iranians, or Afghans to escape the galling degradation and appalling humiliation of being called Kashmiri, with all that the expression connoted at one time."[24] In time, many of these migrant Kashmiri families would distinguish themselves in different fields; a new confidence would encourage future generations to embrace their homeland and contribute to the ferment of the 1930s.

Meanwhile, continued Dogra misgovernance in Kashmir provided an excuse for British intervention. The colonial state posted a British Resident in Jammu and Kashmir to ensure the Dogra state treated its subjects justly and redressed their grievances. The presence of a British Resident provided a mechanism for Kashmiri Muslims to express their grievances; they submitted petitions to the Resident in favor of reforms including revision of taxes; lighter assessment of revenue, preferably in cash; abolition of revenue farming; lifting restrictions on emigration; and the building of new roads and communications.[25]

The late-nineteenth-century construction of the Jhelum Valley Road, linking the princely state with Punjab, increased interactions between the state and expatriate Kashmiris, and generated wider sociopolitical awareness in the Valley,

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manifesting in renewed demands for "freedom." A number of expatriates became involved in efforts to transform the state's social structures and create a voice for excluded Kashmiri Muslims. These expatriate expressions of solidarity with Kashmir complicated Kashmiri identity; in fact, the significance of belonging to Kashmir and being "Kashmiri" began to transcend narrow cultural and territorial definitions and refer primarily to the emotive attachment self-identified Kashmiris had to their homeland, regardless of whether they resided in the state or not. In 1896, Kashmiri Muslims based in Punjab formed Anjumun-i-Kashmir-Mussalmanan-i-Lahore, an association to address their community's challenges; in 1901, it became the Muslim Kashmiri Conference, and in 1908, the All India Muslim Kashmir Conference.[26] As they renamed their organization in English, Kashmiri expatriates in Punjab sought legitimacy in the colonial politics and to expand the support base to include Kashmiris settled in different parts of India. This body of prominent individuals of Kashmiri descent engaged in activities on three different fronts: debating issues that confronted Kashmiri Muslims; presenting memorandums to the Dogra rulers on behalf of Kashmiri Muslims; and mobilizing Kashmiri Muslims to initiate social reform and to improve their social standing via education.[27]

Two prominent Kashmiri residents of Punjab, Munshi Muhammad-ud-din Fauq, the editor of the illustrated Urdu weekly *Kashmir Magazine*, and Muhammad Iqbal, the famed poet-philosopher, became the association's most active members and provided intellectual direction for the growing Kashmiri political awareness. Fauq and Iqbal emphasized the need to create a response of resistance, rather than hopelessness, in order to change Kashmiri Muslims' socioeconomic situation. Born in 1877, Fauq belonged to a middle-class Kashmiri family that had migrated to Sialkot from the Soebug district of the Valley. His literary skills drew him to journalism and he began publishing the *Kashmir Magazine* in Lahore in 1906, providing himself with the perfect medium for expounding his views on the social and economic issues confronting Kashmiris.[28] Intending to stir pride and self-confidence among his compatriots, he filled the weekly with stories of the glorious traditions of Kashmir's history along with his prescriptions for the future.[29]

Alongside his magazine, Fauq also penned a series of books which countered negative depictions of Kashmiris by emphasizing the greatness of Kashmir's past and explained Kashmiri servility as a consequence of foreign domination. *Shabab-i-Kashmir*, written in 1928, is an account of one of the most famous Muslim kings of Kashmir, Sultan Zain-ul-abidin (popularly known as the Bud Shah or "great king"), which sketched the glorious heritage of the king's reign and the contributions made by Kashmiris in the field of arts, literature, and

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architecture that had made Kashmir a centre of learning in the thirteenth century. According to Fauq, Zain-ul-abidin's policy of religious tolerance and inclusion set an example for other monarchs, especially those who privileged their own religious community while denying rights to other religious groups—a not-so-subtle comment on Dogra practices.[30]

Mashair-i-Kashmir, another of Fauq's books, assembled real-life stories about ordinary Kashmiris who had migrated to various parts of India and gained prominence due to their initiative: the Nawabs of Dacca, for example, had migrated from Kashmir as traders but through intelligence and hard work became the rulers of Eastern Bengal. Fauq aimed to convince the Kashmiri Muslim community that despite their disadvantages, with education and by taking advantage of opportunities they too could pull themselves up from a pitiable state and change their destinies. Fauq implored Kashmiri Muslim families to take pride in their Kashmiri identity instead of fabricating their genealogies to claim descent from Arabia, Iran, or Central Asia to fit in with more "honorable classes."[31] Fauq's discourse aimed to build confidence in Kashmiri identity and self-expression.

The other prominent early-twentieth-century literary figure of Kashmiri descent, Muhammad Iqbal, devoted his poetic faculties to providing Kashmiris with guidance. Although Iqbal's family had migrated from Kashmir to Lahore prior to the creation of the Dogra Raj, they had retained an emotional attachment to their homeland. Iqbal's poetry passionately appealed to Kashmiris to rise against oppression and cherish the concept of freedom. One poem, *Javid Nama*, written in 1932, describes a "spiritual journey made by the poet through the spheres of the moon, Mercury, Venus, Mars, Jupiter, Saturn, and beyond to the presence of God."[32] Iqbal adopted the theme of *miraj*, the Prophet Muhammad's spiritual journey across the seven heavens where he encountered and conversed with earlier prophets, to envision "Muslim regeneration and self-realization."[33] On his visit to and beyond the seven heavens, Iqbal comes across Kashmiris who had shaped the history of the region. In his conversations with them, Iqbal praises the dexterity and cleverness of Kashmiris, yet laments that lack of will has reduced them to a state of servitude: "Nation grazes upon another nation; my soul burns like a rue for the people of the Vale." In response, the great Kashmiri saint Sayyid Ali Hamdani refers to an inherent spark among Kashmiris that, once ignited, could "smite the rocks on its path and uproot the fabric of the mountains."[34] In the early decades of the twentieth century, individuals like Fauq and Iqbal voiced the grievances of Kashmiri Muslims in print media, hoping to build public opinion in favor of introducing reforms in the princely state of Jammu and Kashmir

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and improve Muslims' standard of living. In doing so, they meshed concepts of emotional and spiritual freedom and self-respect with calls to action for political freedom and self-determination.

Responding to Fauq's and Iqbal's calls, the Punjab-based expatriate Kashmiri intelligentsia established contacts with religious and urban elites in the princely state, initiating a joint effort to improve the status of their community.[35] Mirwaiz Rasool Shah, the religious preacher of the historic Jama Masjid and leader of a staunch support base in pockets of Srinagar city, emerged as an educational pioneer attempting to remove "Muslim backwardness."[36] In 1889, the Mirwaiz family set up the first primary school in Srinagar, which eventually became Islamia High School. In 1905, the family (in consultation with prominent Punjab-based Kashmiri intellectuals) established the first formal Muslim organization at Srinagar, the Anjumun-i-Nusrat-ul-Islam, with the goal of Kashmiri Muslim cultural regeneration.[37] Expatriate Kashmiris in various parts of India attended the Anjuman's annual conferences. Its monthly journal, *Halat-o-Rou-i-Dad*, published from Lahore, linked Kashmir's future prosperity to education, which would eliminate Kashmiri ignorance and inculcate self-worth. Seeking to end illiteracy among Kashmiri Muslims, the All India Kashmir Muslim Conference provided scholarships to deserving but impoverished Kashmiris. Between 1912 and 1929, the organization gave 123 students almost thirty-one thousand rupees.[38]

While practicing private charity, the conference also submitted memorandums to the maharaja requesting an increase in educational facilities for Muslims and appointing Muslims in state services. They further suggested that the maharaja recruit expatriate Kashmiri Muslims if he had trouble finding qualified Muslim candidates within the state.[39] Perhaps not surprisingly, the maharaja remained indifferent to the Conference's concerns.[40] In fact, he blamed the Kashmiri Muslim community for its backwardness, claiming that Muslims lacked the initiative to adopt English education, despite the equal opportunities theoretically provided to all communities. In 1916, the Dogra government appointed the Sharp Education Commission to inquire into Kashmiri Muslim grievances. The commission suggested making primary education both free and compulsory, to enable poverty-stricken Kashmiris to send their children to school. The minister of education, however, rejected this suggestion, arguing that implementing it would interfere with the economic sustenance of Muslims who relied on their children's labor to make ends meet.[41] Episodes like this increased Muslims' bitterness, as their protests and complaints within the current structures of the state evidently served no purpose; freedom from those structures would clearly be required for any more progress to occur.

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The decade of the 1920s, a formative period for Kashmiris' awakening political consciousness, coincided with the aftermath of the First World War. The global war impacted the already deteriorating economic conditions in the Valley; a steep rise in rice paddy prices made it difficult for the urban poor to afford food grains.[42] Furthermore, the postwar recession decreased the demand for Kashmiri carpets, handicrafts, and shawls, affecting the manufacturing class. Distress and frustration among Kashmiri urbanites increased, eventually erupting in street protests. In 1924, workers in the government-owned silk factory struck to demand higher wages and an end to corruption. Instead of addressing their concerns, the Dogra state forcibly suppressed resistance, leading to the death of seven protestors and injuries to another forty.[43]

The regime's unsympathetic attitude convinced the Muslim clergy, landowners, and wealthy traders that they needed to step up external pressure on the maharaja. In 1924, these elites presented a memorandum to Lord Reading, the viceroy of British India, during his visit to the Valley, demanding government jobs, better educational facilities, ownership rights for the peasantry, and restoration of all mosques under Dogra control to the community. Once the viceroy left the Valley, however, the Dogra administration retaliated. Individuals who had signed the memorandum lost their jobs and land grants, and were debarred from attending the royal *durbar*s, or court sessions.[44] These repressive measures aimed at prominent Muslim families served their intended purpose as a warning to those contemplating resistance. However, they also united the elite Muslim community; rich merchant families donated to those arrested and the exiled, and the memorandum's signatories emerged as leaders of the Kashmiri Muslim community at home and abroad.[45]

While Muslims clamoring for rights from the Dogra regime saw "freedom" as both cause and consequence of the spread of education and social awareness in their community, the Kashmiri Hindus (Pandits), an educated but minority community, struggled to end discrimination from the Dogra administration. The state reserved its top-ranking jobs for Punjabi Hindus. Seeking equality in government employment, the community movement "Kashmir for Kashmiris" demanded that the state instead reserve employment for *mulki*s, or inhabitants of the state. In 1927, the Dogra maharaja, seeking to placate the disgruntled Pandits, passed the Hereditary State Subject Act, allowing only residents of the state to purchase land and seek employment in Jammu and Kashmir. This act entitled a rising segment of educated Kashmiri Muslims, smarting under the discriminatory policies of the Dogra state, to demand employment, including representation in state service jobs, according to their numbers.[46] (The act, retained

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in postcolonial Kashmir, would become a critical signpost in a long-running dispute over Kashmiri identity with both legal and emotional consequences, and will be discussed again in Chapter 2.)

By the late 1920s, the efforts of Kashmiri Muslim elites and their expatriate allies had succeeded in creating a new class of Kashmiri Muslims well versed in English education. These educated young Muslims, mostly from middle-class families, started a Reading Room at Fateh Kadal in Srinagar to discuss and debate their political future under the Dogra Raj. Some spoke directly against the regime. Molvi Muhammad Abdullah Vakil, originally from Shopian district in south Kashmir and a lawyer by profession, advised the educated community via lectures and sermons to wage a political resistance and demand equal rights. Even though the Dogra state had disallowed publication of newspapers in the Valley, Vakil used the Muslim press in Punjab to expose the state's discriminatory policies, secretly sending articles for publication to Munshi Muhammad-ud-din Fauq at Sialkot.[47] The articles published by the Muslim press in Punjab questioned the lack of employment opportunities for Kashmiri Muslims; restrictions on their employment in the army; and the imposition of the Seditious Meetings Act, which banned public meetings without prior approval from the government.[48]

Meanwhile, the middle-class Muslims of Jammu, culturally and socially closer to the Muslims of Punjab, witnessed growing religious tensions across the border. In the 1920s, the Arya Samaj, a Punjabi Hindu revivalist organization, initiated the Shuddi and Sangathan movements to bring non-Muslims into the Hindu fold, while Punjabi Muslims launched the Tabligh movement to counter the conversion drive. These religious tensions spilled into Jammu, making both Hindus and Muslims more aware of their religious identities. Muslim youth in Jammu set up the Young Men's Muslim Association (YMMA) along similar lines as Srinagar's Reading Room party, to protect their communitarian interests.[49]

No problem concerned middle-class Muslims in Jammu and Kashmir more than the question of unemployment. The growing number of educated Muslims and their claims to an equal share in government service-sector jobs created pressure on the Dogra regime; in 1930, in response, the government established an official Civil Service Recruitment Board. While the previous recruitment board had nominated scholarship candidates, new regulations made competitive tests a prerequisite for employment. The upper age limit for candidates was set at twenty, and only candidates belonging to "good and noble families" could apply for higher posts. Many Muslims believed the state had invented these conditions to provide a legal justification for denying them their legitimate share of employment in various sectors. Interestingly, by the 1930s most unemployed Kashmiri Muslim

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graduates were older than twenty-two, and as such were now debarred from any "respectable" service. Even if a candidate met all the criteria, however, the Dogra government reserved the right to deny him employment.[50]

Muslim youth contested the new recruitment rules; in September 1930, a Reading Room deputation to the government provided data on Muslim unemployment and warned that the state was accountable for its Muslim subjects' condition. Dogra representatives, however, rebuked the members of the deputation for their ungratefulness to the Dogra state, despite the maharaja's efforts to recruit a few Muslims in the administration. Although this meeting with the government representatives disappointed the activists, it reinforced their determination to prepare for a long political movement.[51] This new, educated middle-class Kashmiri Muslim leadership succeeded in forging contacts with the religious elites and the rich business classes, who had held the mantle of leadership in the previous decades. Growing political awareness among the Muslim community added a new tone to the Kashmiri discourse on freedom and brought into sharp relief various groups' conflicting visions of freedom.

The First Kashmiri Muslim Resistance: Muslim Reactions and Hindu Responses

Gathering discontent among Kashmiri Muslims, born out of decades of misgovernance, religious discrimination, and neglect, came to a boil in the summer of 1931.[52] As the first Kashmiri Muslim resistance gained ground, the inherent tensions between classes and communities surfaced, tearing at Kashmir's social fabric. Hindu and Muslim communities with different experiences as the subjects of the Dogra Raj perceived the political transformations of the early twentieth century through a communitarian lens. Simultaneously, the sectarian and class divisions within the Kashmiri Muslim community prevented the forging of a unified movement for rights. Although Kashmiri leaders and intellectuals attempted to bridge these inherent contradictions by weaving the Western ideas of nationalism and socialism into Kashmiri discourses of rights and freedoms, it proved a daunting task.

Kashmiri Muslim feelings of religious discrimination intensified after the news flowed into the Valley about the maharaja's officials' disrespect towards Islam, including incidents such as the refusal of the police to give permission to Muslims in Jammu to use a certain piece of land for prayers. The most provocative story concerned the behavior of a Hindu constable, who not only prevented an *imam* from reading his Friday sermon, but also showed disrespect to the Quran.[53] These

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reported events created an uproar among the Valley's Muslim community, where the political and economic climate was now ripe for a mass movement. Muslim leadership—composed of religious elites, rich merchants, and the landed gentry dominant in the 1920s, now joined by middle-class educated youth—decided to initiate a mass resistance against Dogra rule.

One individual who succeeded in making his presence felt among Muslim leaders during this first wave of open resistance was twenty-five-year-old Sheikh Muhammad Abdullah, who subsequently dominated Kashmiri politics for almost five decades. Born near Srinagar in 1905 to a middle-class family of shawl merchants, Abdullah received his early education in a traditional Muslim *maktab*, or religious school, where he learned to read the Quran. He resisted pressure to join the family business, instead dreaming of becoming a doctor. His first experience of anti-Muslim discrimination occurred when the state refused him a scholarship for medical school on religious grounds. Moving to Lahore to secure a Bachelor of Science degree, he became a frequent visitor to Muhammad Iqbal, the eminent poet and philosopher, and an active member of the Kashmir Muslim Conference, which profoundly shaped his political thought. From Lahore, Abdullah moved to Aligarh Muslim University, where he completed his Master of Science in chemistry in 1930. As one of the first Kashmiri Muslims to obtain a master's degree, he hoped to get a scholarship from the Dogra government to study abroad, but was unsuccessful. His personal experiences of marginalization convinced him to initiate a campaign, along with likeminded Kashmiris, to redress the grievances of the Muslim majority. As he later explained:

> I started to question why Muslims were being singled out for such treatment. We constituted the majority and contributed the most towards state's revenue, still we were continuously oppressed. Why? How long could we put up with it? Was it because majority of the government was non-Muslims? Or because most of the lower grade officials who dealt with the public were Kashmiri Pandits? I concluded that the ill-treatment of Muslims was an outcome of religious prejudice.[54]

As an active member of the Reading Room party, he became popular due to his powerful oratory and command of the Quran. His passionate speeches exhorted Kashmiris to cultivate a spirit of sacrifice, without which freedom would be a distant dream:

> The misery of Muslims can be alleviated only through sacrifice. So long as they fear imprisonment and persecution, there will be no end to their suffering. I would be the first individual to make sacrifice in our struggle.[55]

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Abdullah's boldness and fearlessness made him extremely popular among Kashmiris, who fondly referred to him as the Sher-i-Kashmir, the Lion of Kashmir. In the 1930s the Mirwaiz of Jama Masjid, a prominent religious leader, introduced Sheikh Abdullah to the Kashmiri Muslim community as "our leader" and made an impassioned appeal for Kashmiris to act upon his orders and implement his proposed program. The Mirwaiz's support gave Abdullah not only political legitimacy, but access to the historic Jama Masjid platform for his political mobilization.[56]

Abdullah and other leaders, however, were not always the main drivers of events during the wave of resistance that rocked Kashmir in the summer of 1931. In June 1931, the Reading Room party organized a public rally at Khanqah-i-Mohalla, in the old city of Srinagar, to select another deputation of Muslim leaders to present their grievances to the maharaja. This event united all shades of Muslim opinion; religious leaders with different ideological orientations, rich elites, and the educated Muslim middle class came together on a common platform to voice their dissent against the regime. At the end of the meeting, when the main leaders had dispersed, Abdul Qadir, an ethnic Afghan Pathan and servant to a European vacationing in Kashmir, made an inflammatory speech imploring Kashmiri Muslims to rise in revolt against Hindu Dogra rule. Government spies reported this incident to the authorities, who arrested Qadir on charges of provoking communal strife. The disgruntled Kashmiri Muslim community, grateful for Qadir's bold stance, supported him by shouting anti-Dogra state slogans during his trial at the central jail in Srinagar on July 13, 1931.[57] In retaliation, the Dogra police opened fire, injuring hundreds and killing twenty-two. The crowd then rushed into the jail compound, took beds from the guards' quarters, and placed the dead bodies on them, carrying them in a procession toward Jama Masjid.[58]

Some of the protestors used this incident as an excuse for expressing their anger against Kashmiri Hindus, whom they perceived as inseparable from the Dogra government due to their dominant positions in the administration. These men targeted rich Hindu businesses, moneylenders, and landed elites, a move that shocked not only the Hindu community but also the Dogra police, who had never imagined a violent reaction from the supposedly "submissive" Kashmiri Muslims. The Maharaj Gunj market, in the heart of Srinagar city, emerged as the focal point of violence. Dominated by a large influx of Punjabi Hindu business groups, this new market had posed a serious challenge to the Muslim trading community in the localities of Jama Masjid and Nowhatta. A lack of capital combined with the state monopoly over trade prevented Muslims from competing with Punjabi Hindus, who had quickly established a monopoly.[59]

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Some protestors, then, sought to re-establish their control over urban trading spaces, destroying Hindu shops, while others diverted their anger toward Hindu moneylenders' credit registers, destroying records so that no evidence of capital borrowed or interest accumulated by Kashmiri Muslim peasants or laborers was left.[60] The crowds' actions signal that their anger stemmed not only from the immediate incident of police violence, but also from the strains caused by the Great Depression, which had caused an unprecedented slump in the price of grain and a shortage of credit. The motivations of the 1931 riots were economic, social, and political, rather than being a mere expression of Muslim fanaticism against the minority Hindu community.

During these chaotic times, the All India Kashmir Committee at Lahore remained actively involved in Kashmiri resistance. Throughout India, members observed Kashmir Day on August 14, 1931, to show solidarity with Kashmiri Muslims, and worked with the Kashmiri Muslim leadership to reach a compromise with the Dogra administration. The two parties eventually reached an agreement, in which the regime promised to release on bail all prisoners accused of rioting and reinstate all Muslim government officials dismissed or suspended on charges of involvement in the protests. In return, Muslim leaders agreed to suspend the agitation and not indulge in anti-state activities.[61] Kashmiri Muslim workers and laborers, however, interpreted this agreement as a demonstration of weakness on the part of their supposed leadership. Those who had lost loved ones during the shooting and those who had suffered beatings, injuries, and arrests at the hands of the Dogra forces after the July 13 incident were unwilling to give up resistance. Gauging the public mood, elites and middle-class leaders realized it was imperative to continue the agitation despite the signed agreement, lest they lose public support.[62]

As the unrest continued, Kashmiri women from Maisuma and Gawkadal took the reins of protest and paraded the streets of the city, singing songs against the tyranny (*zulum*) of the Dogra Raj. Deeply affected by the arrests and even killings of their male relatives, the main economic providers in most families, the women's lyrics expressed their desire for a *just* government. Even the violence of police force did not dampen their spirits, although it had the capacity to turn fatal. A thirty-five-year-old woman, Freechi, whose husband had died in police firing, became a common sight at every procession. On one occasion, when policemen began to beat women protesters, Freechi physically assaulted an officer, hurling a fire pot (*kangari*) at his face and permanently disfiguring him. In retaliation, the police opened fire on the women, killing Freechi along with four other women and two children.[63]

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There was no political space to express dissent, and the city's shrines and mosques emerged as points of congregation for the protestors. In September 1931, thousands of Kashmiris from Srinagar and its outskirts, tired of peaceful demonstrations, assembled at Khanyar's sacred shrine, the Dastageer Sahib, and paraded the streets of Srinagar with axes, spears, and lances to demonstrate their strength. To curb this defiance, the maharaja imposed an emergency ordinance, Notification No.19-L, drafted on the lines of the Burma Ordinance of 1818, which the British had used to put down an armed rebellion. It empowered any competent authority to arrest, without a warrant, any person who could reasonably be suspected of promoting or intending to promote disaffection against government authority. The government or its agencies, meanwhile, could take possession of any land or building, and even of moveable property. Non-compliance upon receipt of orders could lead to imprisonment extending up to three years, whipping not exceeding thirty stripes, and collective fines. This imposition of martial rule intensified state suppression and the Dogra army had many Kashmiris stripped naked and flogged at the exhibition grounds in full gaze of the public.[64] Instead of restoring peace, however, the military crackdown strengthened the Kashmiri Muslim challenge to Dogra domination.[65]

Kashmiri unrest did not remain confined to the princely state. In neighboring Punjab, two rival Muslim groups, the Ahrars and the Ahmadiyyas, vied to appropriate the Kashmir issue and therefore emerge as leaders of the wider Muslim community.[66] The All India Muslim Kashmiri Conference, reconstituted in 1931 as the All India Kashmir Committee under the leadership of Bashir-ud-din Mahmud Ahmad, the Khalifa of the Ahmadiyya community, saw Kashmir as an ideal location to win converts.[67] The Kashmir Committee, now mostly populated by Ahmadiyya members, championed civil rights for Kashmiri Muslims. The committee requested a meeting with the maharaja to resolve their differences and promote peaceful reconciliation, but the Dogra authorities invariably rejected such offers. The committee also established contact with Sheikh Abdullah in Srinagar and arranged to support Kashmiri political activists with propaganda and funds.[68]

Conversely, the Majlis-i-Ahrar, composed mostly of "anti-British urban Muslims and reformist members of the *ulama* with links to the Indian National Congress,"[69] adopted a more aggressive attitude toward securing Kashmiri Muslim rights. The Ahrars initiated the Kashmir Chalo movement, mobilizing almost 2,500 volunteers to infiltrate Jammu territory with *jatha*s, bands of supporters, who expressed dissent openly and courted arrest.[70] Inspired by the Ahrars, Muslim peasants in the border region of Jammu and Mirpur rose in revolt against the exploitative policies of the Dogra state that subjected them to

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heavy taxation.[71] Facing pressure on all fronts, the Dogra maharaja appealed to the British government for help and protection. In response, Britain compelled the maharaja to appoint an inquiry commission to probe the demands of his subjects, partly because his government had failed to suppress the popular revolt against it, and partly due to the highly effective agitation carried on in Punjab.[72]

The Glancy Commission, formed on November 12, 1931, included four members (two Muslims and two Hindus), each representing the regions of Kashmir and Jammu, yet failed to appease the minority community. The Muslim memorandum submitted to the commission, prepared in consultation with the members of the All India Kashmir Muslim Committee in Punjab, demanded a responsible government, a constitution, and the right to participate in elections. The Glancy Commission recommended restoration of Muslim religious shrines to the community. Another important clause in its final report related to issues of employment and education. It suggested "an increase in the number of Muslim teachers" and the appointment of a special officer for "promoting Muslim education." On the matter of distribution of government service, the commission argued against pitching minimum qualifications unnecessarily high, asking instead that the government advertise all vacancies and take effective measures to protect the interests of every community. Although the recommendations of the commission mostly protected the interests of the upper classes, peasants were ensured proprietary rights. These reforms largely satisfied the Muslim community.[73]

In October 1932, a representative body of upper- and middle-class Muslims formed their first political organization, the Muslim Conference, whose goal was to protect and promote the interests of the Muslim community. To make the Muslim Conference movement a success, Sheikh Abdullah sought an alliance with the Jammu Muslims organized under the banner of the YMMA and led by lawyer and political activist Chaudhry Ghulam Abbas. To begin with, the Muslim Conference professed its loyalty to the maharaja and claimed only to want to establish a responsible government under him. Although the organization passed resolutions demanding proprietary rights for the peasantry and a reduction in taxes for the labor class, for the most part it focused on constitutional reforms and sought a proportional share in service jobs for the Muslim community.[74] This longstanding goal united middle-class Muslims belonging to different sub-regions and with myriad ideological orientations.

The unity among Muslim Conference members did not last long. Personal egos and ideological differences soon led to a split within the party, as leaders disagreed on strategy around outside influences, especially from Punjab. Mirwaiz Yusuf

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Shah wanted to disassociate Kashmir's freedom struggle from the influence of the Ahmadiyya-dominated All India Kashmir Committee at Lahore. His religious beliefs conflicted with the Ahmadiyyas' challenging of the finality of prophethood and, considering them heretics, he preferred not to associate with them politically. However, Abdullah wanted to work in close cooperation with them, considering their financial and moral support vital to the success of the movement.

Abdullah and Yusuf Shah also adopted contrary positions in an important intra-Muslim debate: the relationship between shrine worship and Islam. This issue had provoked sectarian quarrels between the two main religious leaders of Srinagar city, Mirwaiz Hamdani, who supported shrine worship, and Mirwaiz Yusuf Shah, who was against it. The conflict exploded into violence in July 1932 following Hamdani's eviction from the Jama Masjid by supporters of Yusuf Shah. In this battle Abdullah sided with Mirwaiz Hamdani, hoping to gain support from the custodians of shrines who held significant sway over Muslim public opinion.[75] Yusuf Shah retaliated by labelling Abdullah as an Ahmadiyya, a charge that had an impact on his popularity in the Valley. Vociferously denying this allegation, Abdullah was forced after all to distance himself from the All India Kashmir Committee.[76]

The tensions between the two leaders heightened after Mirwaiz Yusuf Shah expressed his loyalty to the Dogra ruler and accepted "an annual honorarium of Rs. 600, two rolls of English cotton, four rolls of China silk, a silver tray, and a shawl" in return for the maharaja's promise to consider Muslim demands.[77] His acceptance of this honorarium allowed his opponents to question Yusuf Shah's commitment to the Kashmiri movement. In 1933, he resigned from the Muslim Conference and formed his own political party, the Azad Muslim Conference.[78] Subsequently, the rivalry between these two leaders divided the urban Muslim community into "Shers," or Lions, after Abdullah's nickname "the Lion of Kashmir," and "Bakras," or Goats, in reference to the beards worn by Muslim *ulama* like the Mirwaiz.[79] The two groups could not reconcile their differences and often indulged in street fights. This rivalry prevented Muslim middle-class leadership from following up on the opening created by the mass uprising of the early 1930s.[80] Instead, Abdullah's Muslim Conference adopted a "moderate" practice of presenting memorandums and recommendations to the Dogra state.

In 1934, the maharaja established the Franchise Commission to give his disgruntled subjects some representation in a legislative assembly. Made up of thirty nominated and thirty-three elected members, it allowed the Muslim Conference to develop its organization as a political party. However, the franchise was restricted to men paying at least 20 rupees a year in land revenue, leaving out

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the poor among whom the Muslim Conference had been organizing. To win a majority in the assembly, they needed the support of affluent minorities as well as Muslim elites.[81] Therefore, Conference members considered it prudent to build bridges of understanding with groups of Hindus and Sikhs who were willing to work together on a "strategy of regional mobilization."[82]

Waging a united struggle for civil rights and bringing majority and minority communities onto a common platform posed new challenges. The minority Hindu community, comprising approximately 5 percent of the Valley's population, dominated the state services and viewed the political mobilization of the Muslim community with apprehension. They had expressed unhappiness with the 1931 Glancy Commission recommendation to increase the number of Muslims in government employment. Any concessions to Muslim demands, they argued, would come at the expense of their jobs. As such, Kashmiri Hindu organizations like the Sanatan Dharma Young Men's Association and the Yuvak Sabha initiated a "Roti Agitation," an "agitation for bread," that made preservation against Muslim encroachment its main priority and asked the Dogra state not to implement the Glancy Commission's recommendations.[83] Their hostility toward Kashmiri Muslim demands for equal rights caused some concern within the Hindu community; some Hindus believed that working with the majority community, rather than distancing themselves, was in the larger interests of Kashmiri Hindus. The minorities who sought cooperation with Muslims played an influential role in shaping Kashmiri discourses on freedom in the late colonial period.

For both Muslim and Hindu Kashmiris, ideas about "freedom" emerged in conversation with international ideologies popular during the 1930s and 1940s, that is, nationalism, communism, and socialism. Kashmiris well versed in English education sought to embed these sometimes conflicting ideas in the political fabric of Kashmir and thereby usher in an era of responsible government. One intellectual who reoriented Kashmiri Muslim resistance discourse was a prominent Hindu political activist who faced excommunication by his own community because he decided to support Kashmiri Muslim demands during the Glancy Commission era. Born in 1905 (the same year as Sheikh Abdullah) to a middle-class Pandit family, Prem Nath Bazaz graduated from Punjab University in 1927 and found employment as a supervisor of W.W. Trust Girls School at Srinagar. He began his political career as the president of the Yuvak Sabha, which worked to infuse a spirit of "patriotism" in favor of the Dogra ruler.[84] Bazaz was a prolific writer and established several newspapers like *Vitasta* (1932), *Hamdard* (1935), and *Voice of Kashmir* (1959) to address the political, economic, and social problems faced by Kashmiris.[85] Distressed by the Hindu–Muslim riots of the early 1930s, Bazaz

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attributed growing "communalism" in Kashmir to the support Kashmiri Muslims received from "pan-Islamic groups" in Punjab. Bazaz feared that alliance with Punjabi Muslims would ultimately lead to the formation of a theocratic state in Kashmir.[86] Additionally, however, he believed that the Pandit community's hostile attitude toward Muslim demands would endanger the interests of that minority community, writing that "the progress and prosperity of Kashmiri Pandits is synonymous with the complete political, social and economic freedom of Kashmir and liberation of the Muslim masses." His advice to his community was to take a leading role in Kashmiri resistance so as to direct it along a "saner path."[87] Bazaz established close friendships with Sheikh Abdullah and his associates, and advised them to make their movement broad-based rather than communitarian.[88]

Bazaz, along with other Kashmiri "progressives," created a new discourse on "freedom" that emphasized class differences rather than communitarian divisions. They promoted socialist ideas that could improve the indigent situation of the subordinate social classes, develop agriculture, and provide safeguards to the laboring classes. They believed that a strong focus on the economic issues that confronted poor Kashmiris could relegate religion to the background. Socialism fascinated Kashmiri Muslim leaders, who considered its economic basis identical with the teachings of the Quran emphasizing economic equity and social justice. The success of the socialist economic program, however, would be dependent on Kashmir's emergence as a unified entity.

To help Kashmiris conceive of their homeland holistically, Bazaz and Abdullah organized meetings and processions emphasizing unity as a prerequisite for economic justice and political liberty. In his presidential address at the annual session of the Muslim Conference in December 1933, Abdullah appealed to non-Muslims to wage a united struggle for the welfare of all "oppressed classes and communities."[89] Other members of the Muslim Conference also focused on the "unity" theme to mobilize all religious communities to usher real progress and prosperity.[90] However, Kashmiri Pandits expressed apprehensions about joining the Muslim Conference, as the party's name indicated that it was the representative body of Kashmiri Muslims exclusively. In 1934, Kashyap Bandhu, a prominent member of the Kashmiri Pandit community, submitted a memorandum to the Dogra prime minister, expressing fears about the Muslim political mobilization. He demanded safeguards for Kashmiri Pandits in state services, scholarships, and protection of their religious places.[91] Despite these concerns, in 1935, Abdullah and Bazaz jointly began to publish *Hamdard*, which romanticized Kashmir's past and made constant efforts to paper over the political, cultural, and religious differences between the communities. *Hamdard* asked Kashmiris to refrain from

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using terms like "Hindu" and "Muslim" in their political discourse, and instead use expressions like "oppressor" and "oppressed," as those roles could be found in any community.

Hamdard therefore implored all communities to struggle against "hunger, poverty, oppression and exploitation." Prem Nath Bazaz's 1936 article "Meaning of Nationalism" asked Kashmiri Muslims to keep away from religious parties that exploited religion to "bind the poor in the chains of slavery and ignorance."[92] Instead, Kashmiris should emulate countries like Egypt, Syria, and Iraq that prioritized secular nationalism over a theocratic state. Bazaz praised the Egyptian nationalist leader Saad Zaghloul for taking his country along the path of modernity and parliamentary democracy. Zaghloul not only excluded religion from politics, but also worked with diverse minority communities to build a strong Egyptian nation. Bazaz appealed to Kashmiri Pandits to model their politics along lines similar to Egypt's Christian Copts, who had defied British attempts to sow dissension, preferring to stand beside Egyptian Muslims. These actions had enabled them to emerge from the sidelines and play an important part in Egyptian politics.[93]

Kashmiri progressives like Bazaz worked tirelessly toward the secularization of Kashmir's politics and the promotion of Hindu–Muslim unity, a goal shared by many on the left. In 1936, Bazaz formed the Kashmir Youth League, representing "young elements from all communities, professing different religions," to struggle for a responsible government that would ensure economic, social, and cultural regeneration.[94] Placing the Kashmiri struggle in the context of the wider struggles for freedom taking place in other countries, the Youth League demonstrated solidarity with the 1936 Palestinian revolt against British colonial rule, criticizing its draconian imperialist suppression.[95] Youth League activists wanted Kashmiris to understand that resistance movements in other parts of the world stemmed not from religious differences, but from the forces of imperialism that curb the life prospects of the powerless.[96] With the support of various student bodies, the Youth League popularized the theory of class struggle and brought together individuals with leftist leanings from both Muslim and non-Muslim communities.

This period also coincided with the entry of communist leaders from India into the Valley, especially B. P. L. Bedi, Freda Bedi, and K. M. Ashraf. Communist activists established contacts with Kashmiri leaders and encouraged them to include workers and laborers in their movement. Although the Muslim Conference had rhetorically highlighted the challenges of the laboring classes, it had failed to bring about an organized labor movement. Credit for organizing laborers into trade unions went instead to Kashmiri communists who organized

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small associations representing occupations as diverse as drivers, boatmen, carpet-makers, and shawl weavers. In 1936, G. M. Sadiq, a Kashmiri communist political activist, brought these small unions under the banner of a single organization, the Mazdoor Sabha. Membership was open to all, and it emphasized respect for all religions.[97] The organization's goal was to end the disparities that existed between the capitalists and workers, rather than to claim a "fair share" of jobs for each religious community.[98]

The trade union movement appealed to workers suffering as a result of the Great Depression of the 1930s. The Depression meant adverse conditions for Kashmiri handicrafts industries like shawl and carpet weaving due to plummeting demand in the world market. Discontent grew among Kashmiri artisans, many of whom lost their jobs and found few alternative sources of employment. The Mazdoor Sabha emerged as their advocate and warned the government that no peace was possible in a country with high unemployment.[99] The Muslim Conference appropriated the rhetoric and organizational force of these labor movements and passed resolutions asking the government to improve labor conditions. Red banners and flags, the symbol of workers' revolutions, adorned the streets of Srinagar, and secular rather than religious slogans became the norm at every public gathering.

Secular progressive discourse was not confined to imploring Hindus and Muslims to unite around shared concerns. Many educated Kashmiris with leftist leanings, both Hindu and Muslim, wanted to mold their regional struggle on the secular-socialist ideas of the Indian National Congress. Prem Nath Bazaz, for example, participated in the annual Congress session at Lahore in 1930. He established contact with the prominent Congress leader Jawaharlal Nehru, who advised him that the local struggle in Kashmir "must be viewed in the light of the Indian struggle" as the "fate of Kashmir was bound up with India"—an ominous statement in light of the developments after partition.[100] Throughout the mid-1930s, Kashmiri activists debated the political role and impact of the two parties, the Congress and the Muslim League, operating at an all-India level. Most articles and editorials in *Hamdard* attempted to link Kashmir's politics with wider Congress goals. They presented Congress as a party focused on removing disparities between the rich and poor, and praised Congress leaders who sacrificed their lives for India's freedom from British imperialism.

Conversely, articles critical of the Muslim League, the party formed to protect the interests of Muslim minorities in India, represented the League as a party that only protected elite interests and demonstrated no efforts to bring economic freedom and social justice to the people at large. As the Muslim League distanced

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itself from popular movements for responsible government in the princely states, *Hamdard* advised Kashmiris to stay away from this party of "landed elites" and "rich business groups" with zero interest in bringing economic prosperity to downtrodden Kashmiris.[101] In 1937, Abdullah met Nehru at Lahore railway station, where the Congress leader insisted that a broad-based movement shaped by the ideals of secularism, socialism, and egalitarian society would be in the best interests of Kashmiris.[102] Impressed by Nehru, who was leading the All India States People's Conference, an organization that urged the princely states to introduce democratic representative governments, Abdullah took this advice to heart and decided to expand the Kashmiri rights movement.

This close contact between Abdullah and the Congress leaders came to fruition in the late 1930s, when the Sheikh wanted to emerge as a "nationalist" leader representing all communities. In his presidential address at the sixth annual session of the Muslim Conference, held in Jammu in March 1938, Abdullah emphasized that every subject of the maharaja—whether Hindu, Sikh, Buddhist, or Muslim—who had suffered under the present regime should get an opportunity to join in the struggle for a responsible government. He corrected the misconception among the Muslim community that all non-Muslims lived a life of comfort, providing examples of poor non-Muslims who also struggled against inequalities.[103] Despite his party's name, his demand for responsible government was not only on behalf of the majority of the Kashmiri population who were Muslims, but for all inhabitants of the state.

The Muslim Conference followed up this speech by issuing a manifesto entitled "National Demand." The document emphasized that their movement was one of peace and goodwill, aimed at securing elementary rights of citizenship. They wanted the maharaja to commit to a Jammu and Kashmir legislature that would consist entirely of members elected by all adults, with representation provided to workers and traders. Elections to the legislature would be based on joint electorates and minorities would be provided safeguards and weightages to ensure their representation. To ratify the manifesto, the Muslim Conference organized meetings and processions in various parts of Srinagar city. The Dogra state clamped down on these demonstrations and arrested top leaders of the Muslim Conference, including Sheikh Abdullah, provoking a renewed statewide agitation.[104]

An interesting dynamic of the new agitation was the Hindu community's decision to abstain from participating in strikes and demonstrations, despite efforts made by a few members of the community to show solidarity with the Muslim Conference. Eighteen non-Muslim members of the legislative assembly

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representing Jammu province issued a joint statement rejecting the National Demand manifesto since it did not represent the interests of the Pandit community. Acceptance of the Muslim Conference's "demand," they argued, would mean acceptance of Muslim rule.[105] Yuvak Sabha, the Kashmiri Pandit organization, considered the association of a few non-Muslims insufficient to give the movement a national character.[106] With most non-Muslims hesitating to support a political system that would transfer power to the Muslim majority, their aloofness created concerns among some Muslim Conference members that the minority community would always align with the Dogra state because their economic and political interests were protected under the status quo.[107]

Meanwhile, however, Abdullah continued to forge close contacts with the Indian National Congress, even presiding over one of the meetings held at the party's annual session at Tripura. In his speech, he assured the Congress that the Muslim Conference movement against the maharaja stemmed from economic issues, rather than "communal" motives.[108] In June 1939, a special session of the All Jammu and Kashmir Muslim Conference met at Pather Masjid, Srinagar, to change the name of the party from "Muslim" to "National," widening the scope of Kashmir's rights movement and including all religions and classes in its fold. Whereas the old Muslim Conference had demanded rights for Muslims from a Hindu government, the National Conference would couch its demands in terms of class.[109]

Not all Muslim Conference members were thrilled; some feared that it would become merely a local branch of the all-India party, although several acquiesced under pressure from Abdullah. Chaudhry Ghulam Abbas supported the resolution, but clarified that his support depended on an assurance that the National Conference would never submerge itself into the Congress.[110] Others were dead-set against this change and remained convinced that the name change would undermine Muslim interests, since the community was not yet politically mature enough to protect its own interests.[111] Chaudhry Hamidullah Khan, an important Muslim Conference member from Jammu, opposed the resolution on the ground that non-Muslims (who formed 20 percent of the population and held 90 percent of the government service positions) would not cooperate with Muslims. Hindu–Muslim unity was impossible, Khan felt, because Hindus held an advantageous position in the power structures. He added that those Kashmiri Pandits who had joined the Conference's ranks did not command the confidence of their community, saying:

> There can be no unity between the weak and the strong. They cannot march together. In Jammu we have Hindu money-lender while Muslims constitute

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> the poor peasantry. Unity among them is impossible. Rajput's pride themselves to be rulers, they do not, therefore, feel any need for unity; that is why no other nation is coming forward by inch [*sic*]. How then are you going ahead by changing your own organization?[112]

Out of the 176 delegates of the Muslim Conference, 3 voted against and 3 walked out in protest. Despite Abdullah's hopes, the conversion of the Muslim Conference into the National Conference failed to bring Kashmiris together; ironically, it deepened the wedge within and between communities instead.

Failed Nationalism? Muslim Conference, National Conference, and the Minorities

Nationalist ideology was introduced into public debate in Kashmir as a way to ensure responsible government and proper representation of all communities in the state administration. Yet the demand for a responsible government failed to bridge conflicting political positions in the princely state of Jammu and Kashmir. Although Kashmiri nationalism drew on Western democratic ideals of responsible government, to popularize the concept outside the small circle of Western-educated elites, Muslim leaders continued to associate with religious festivals, shrines, and mosques. As Christopher Bayly has argued, Indian nationalism was widely rooted in society and "molded by ideologies, political norms and social organizations which derived from deeper indigenous inheritance."[113] Similarly, Kashmiri nationalism was built more from the region's social complexion than from discourses derivative of Western nationalism.

Abdullah not only used Quranic verses to mobilize popular support, but drew on older Kashmiri mystic religious traditions to spread his message, especially in rural areas. In one of his speeches, he linked the idea of "freedom" with ethics, humanism, and brotherhood, all concepts inherent in early Kashmiri texts and integral to a society greatly influenced by Islamic mystic traditions. Abdullah painted the Kashmiri struggle as a war between the forces of good and evil, which he defined as "all undesirable elements of human life such as slavery, poverty, ignorance, illiteracy and various other causes of human miseries."[114] The struggle for freedom, he wrote, could only succeed if ordinary men developed strong character, expressed love toward humanity, and endured suffering patiently. The spiritual struggle to be human remained the key component of Kashmiri freedom.

With Kashmiri society deeply aware of its religious sensibilities, Sheikh Abdullah and his political cohorts focused on religious terminology and other

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existing forms of speech and sentiment to mobilize the masses in support of Western concepts like nationalism. Maulana Masoodi, a close associate of Abdullah, explained that integrated national action to pursue a set political goal was in consonance with the tenets of the Holy Quran. The Quran imposes on Muslims the responsibility of cooperating with non-Muslims to attain a common goal—such as, Masoodi argued, a responsible government in Kashmir: "God had ordained Prophet Muhammad that those non-Muslims who sought to enter into an alliance with Muslims should be permitted to do so." He extensively quoted the Treaty of Hudaybiyyah, signed between Muslims representing the state of Medina and non-Muslims representing the Quraysh tribe of Mecca, which ended animosities between the two cities and allowed Muslims to return to Mecca to perform the annual pilgrimage.[115] These examples, and Abdullah's equation of "nationalism" with the mystical concepts of "unity and brotherhood," helped him convince his mostly illiterate Kashmiri Muslim base to support his efforts to unite majority and minority communities in pursuit of responsible government.

To make nationalism a success, Abdullah emphasized mutual tolerance between Hindus and Muslims, which he later claimed as evidence of his secularism. He refused, however, to consign religion to a private sphere. His essay "It Is Not Right to Subordinate Politics to Religion in the Light of Islam" did not deny the affinity between politics and religion, but, rather, gave an entirely different interpretation of this relationship. Abdullah argued that the fundamental aspect of Islam is *din*, the ethical side of religion, and not ritual practices. As the ethical side of religion teaches compassion, love, equality, and justice, the application of ethics to politics cannot create communitarian differences; on the contrary, it helps transcend divisions and works for the welfare of all. If religion in this sense is removed from politics, it would lead to anarchy and injustice. In Abdullah's perception, therefore, there was no contradiction between Muslim and nationalist identities. Being a nationalist did not mean that "Muslims should abandon their religious traditions," as every Muslim or Hindu could become a true nationalist or a perfect patriot without "turning their back on their religion."[116] Abdullah explained that movements of national struggles sometimes appear in the guise of religion because religion makes for the most effective appeal to human emotions.[117]

Nationalism and religious symbolism became intertwined in twentieth-century Kashmir. Abdullah used Friday services for political mobilization and participated in religious festivals like Milad-ul-Nabi, the birthday of the Prophet, and Miraj-ul-Alam, the day commemorating the heavenly journey in which the Prophet reached the presence of God, at the Hazratbal mosque, in order to establish ties with both urban and rural Kashmiris.[118] Abdullah's instrumental adaptation of

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nationalism to touch cultural and religious sensibilities was, as was typical for him at this time, aimed at reaching as wide an audience as possible.

Nationalist ideology, however, instead of uniting Kashmir and forging a responsible government, exposed the tensions within and between communities. Some members of the Kashmiri Pandit community, although apprehensive about Abdullah's motivations in creating the National Conference, did decide to join the party and take part in shaping the National Demand. Pandit Jialal Kilam, an important member of the minority community, tried to assuage its fears, promising that non-Muslim support of the National Demand would not lead to a transfer of power to Muslims; even after the creation of a responsible government, the Hindu maharaja would still exercise real power. The options before the Kashmiri Hindu community, he argued, were either to support the National Conference, which was closer to the Congress Party, or to let the Muslim League, a party that wanted the division of India, to establish a foothold in the Valley.[119]

The non-Muslim members of the National Conference, however, felt uncomfortable with Abdullah's continued association with Muslim symbols, mosques, and shrines. They questioned his commitment to secular nationalism and asked him to disassociate from the maintenance of shrines, as he was theoretically now leading a "National" organization and not a "Muslim" one. Abdullah rejected this criticism, questioning the double standards of Hindu party members who had no reservations about the Congress's use of Hindu symbols to mobilize the masses, but considered a similar strategy by Abdullah to be evidence of Muslim "communalism."[120] The tensions between Muslim and non-Muslim National Conference members disillusioned Prem Nath Bazaz, once an ardent Congress supporter, who now expressed dejection about how members of his own community had interpreted Congress "nationalism." He wrote:

> In trying to bring National Conference under the hegemony of the Congress leaders, the Hindu and the Sikh members were not prompted by any burning desire of freedom or even by wish to secularize state politics. They only felt happy that by doing so they were helping the cause of India nationalism, which despite the statements of Congress leaders to the contrary, was becoming another name for Hindu nationalism. Clearly it was the promoting of the communal mentality of the Hindus which was cleverly presented in a nationalist secular garb.[121]

Concepts like "nationalism" and "communalism" dominated the political discourse of the 1930s and 1940s. Ayesha Jalal has dismantled the misconception that these positions were binary opposites. The term "communal" was associated

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with those who did not belong to the Congress and articulated a politics of Muslim interest. Conversely, "unity of religion and politics at the level of discourse and pro-Congress national activity" was considered a nationalist position.[122] In the context of Kashmir both Hindus and Muslims considered the other "communal" for supporting their communitarian social, political, and economic interests. While Kashmiri Pandits considered Abdullah's articulation of "Muslim interests" in pursuit of power politics an expression of Muslim communalism, Kashmiri Muslims considered that their own politics, even when motivated solely by a desire to protect their communitarian interests, were an example of true nationalism, while labeling Kashmiri Hindus "communalists" for resisting the National Conference's political vision.

Distrust between the majority and minority communities in the Valley stemmed from fears and apprehensions about being dominated, politically and culturally, by the "other."[123] The Kashmiri Muslim community resented Kashmiri Hindus' resistance to their demands for equal rights and questioned their support for the maharaja; however, the minority community believed the "nationalism" of the National Conference was a façade for majority rule to their own detriment. As a member of the majority community and the leader of a nationalist party, the onus remained on Abdullah to find a way to gain the confidence of the minorities.

One missed opportunity for Abdullah to emerge as a representative of all communities came up during the Devanagari–Persian script controversy of the 1940s. Persian had been the state's official language for centuries and educated Kashmiris, both Hindu and Muslim, spoke and wrote it fluently. In 1898, Maharaja Pratap Singh "replaced Persian with Urdu as the official language, to benefit Punjabi Hindus" who held key posts in the administration and facilitate importing even more Punjabis. In the 1940s, the Dogra state decided to introduce the Devanagari script, in addition to the Persian script, for writing Hindustani. The official argument was that although Hindustani in Persian script was the state's official language, the state had to consider the reality that non-Muslims were more attracted to Sanskrit or Hindi. The government appointed a committee to consider the medium of instruction in state schools, which recommended against the introduction of two scripts on the grounds that this would encourage "separatist tendencies." The government went ahead regardless, issuing an order that the state language should be common Hindustani but written in two scripts. Students would have the option to choose either script, but teachers without knowledge of both scripts could not seek employment. Kashmiri Muslims resented this decision, as their representation in the education department had recently risen to 40 percent, but almost none of them were acquainted with the Devanagari script.[124]

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The language question gave Muslim members of the National Conference an opportunity to gain minority trust by presenting a compromise solution acceptable to both communities. Prem Nath Bazaz suggested making knowledge of both scripts compulsory for all students and teachers; Abdullah rejected this suggestion, condemning it as ill-conceived. For Abdullah, taking a position on the language question contrary to the interests of the Muslim community meant damaging his support base. The National Conference organized protests and demonstrations in mosques and shrines against the decision to make Devanagari script necessary for employment in the education department. Extremely disappointed with the Muslim members of the National Conference, Bazaz, one of the Conference's main architects, saw this protest as "as a betrayal to the social, economic and spiritual emancipation of the motherland."[125] He distanced himself from both the National Conference and the Congress, both of which, he now believed, exploited religion for political ends.

After the language controversy, non-Muslims were convinced that they could not trust the National Conference to safeguard their cultural and linguistic interests. The National Demand had guaranteed protection of minorities' legitimate religious, cultural, and economic rights. An article in *The Tribune* stated: "Do the Muslim members stand by the National Demand? If so, may we enquire if their attitude on the script question is consistent with the assurance contained in the demand?"[126] Almost all Pandits disassociated from the National Conference, considering the Dogra ruler the protector of their community's interests. The inability of the National Conference's Hindu and Muslim members to put aside their fears of the other and arrive at a compromise power-sharing solution led to the failure of nationalism as a solution for Kashmir's problems.

Moreover, the criticism leveled against the National Conference was not the exclusive province of non-Muslims; some urban Muslims in the Valley and Jammu also disagreed with Abdullah's politics and offered a tough resistance to the "nationalist" creed. They saw its adoption as a step towards bringing Kashmiri politics into the wider orbit of the Indian National Congress, and felt that it would ultimately lead to Hindu domination. Some Muslims who had resisted the formation of the National Conference revived the old Muslim Conference in 1941, after Abdullah failed to unite the various religious communities within Jammu and Kashmir. Jammu Muslims, with a few exceptions, had not supported the formation of the National Conference in the first place. The idea of nationalism did not appeal to them; the prevalence of Hindu rightist organizations in Jammu and Punjab made them insecure, heightening their need for an explicitly Muslim party to protect their interests. Although Chaudhry Ghulam Abbas, an important

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leader from Jammu, had joined the National Conference, there was always pressure on him to leave the party; in 1940, Abbas resigned without offering any explanation, and in 1942 he lent his public support to the revival of the Muslim Conference.[127]

The leaders of the new Muslim Conference were landed elite and educated middle-class Kashmiris, with very few, if any, coming from the countryside. During the 1940s the party focused on protecting Muslim elite interests. Its grievances against the Dogra state included an increase in the percentage of Hindu representation in the cabinet and state services; the "lack of trust" shown toward Muslim employees; and the promulgation of the Arms Act, which allowed Rajput Hindus to keep firearms but placed restrictions on firearm possession for other communities. [128] The party also demanded the repeal of the penal code's cow-killing provision. Politically, the Muslim Conference decided to align with the Muslim League and offered its full support to the demand for the state of Pakistan.

Personal rivalries and diverging approaches to politics in Jammu and Kashmir caused conflicts between the Muslim Conference and the National Conference. Criticism and condemnation of the National Conference in the early 1940s made its leaders intolerant of any opposition. Street battles between supporters of Abdullah and Mirwaiz Yusuf Shah, who had broken with Abdullah in 1932, became a daily routine.[129] In Jammu province the popularity of the National Conference declined after members from the localities of Mirpur, Poonch, and Rajouri tendered their resignations and joined the Muslim Conference. In 1944, Chaudhry Ghulam Abbas even appealed to Abdullah to join the Muslim Conference, as the National Conference was still failing to emerge as a widely representative body.[130] Thereafter, Abdullah and his close associates established contact with Muhammad Ali Jinnah, the president of the All India Muslim League, hoping he could bring about a compromise between the two warring political parties in Kashmir.[131]

In the mid-1940s, the Muslim League under Jinnah emerged as a powerful organization demanding a Muslim state of Pakistan. Both rival parties from the princely state of Jammu and Kashmir extended invitations to Jinnah to visit the state, and provided him a warm welcome when he came. Abdullah offered to acknowledge the Muslim League's superiority over the Congress at an all-India level, but in return sought a policy of neutrality on the part of the League as far as the Muslim Conference and National Conference were concerned.[132] Jinnah refused to oblige. Instead, in his address at the annual session of the Muslim Conference, Jinnah criticized the inherent contradictions within the National Conference, claiming that it replicated Nehru's Congress Party. Both claimed to

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represent all communities, while in reality the National Conference remained a Muslim party, just as the Congress was a representative body of Hindus. He wanted the Muslim community in Jammu and Kashmir state to give up this "politics of deception," as it had only divided them into two camps.[133] Jinnah's complete support for the Muslim Conference caused an irreversible drift of the National Conference away from the Muslim League, with far-reaching repercussions on Kashmir's future history. However, due to its largely ineffective leadership, the Muslim Conference failed to capitalize on Jinnah's open support to build a mass base.[134] Instead Abdullah, challenged on all fronts, reached out to rural Kashmiris with a new "communist" vision to become a beacon of hope for the impoverished and politically disenfranchised.

Communists, Critics, and the Question of Self-determination in Agrarian Kashmir

In the 1940s, the agrarian question shaped the concept of emancipation. Under the influence of Indian communists, the National Conference presented an image of Kashmir free from social and economic hierarchies. Although the economic rhetoric of the nationalists allowed extension of their support base in rural Kashmir to counteract their falling popularity among educated urban Kashmiris, the elite classes and communities threatened by their radical vision for a free Kashmir launched a virulent critique. Here I trace how Kashmiri activists weaved socialist and communist ideas into their discourses on economic freedom, presenting a vision of a free and prosperous Kashmir, which mesmerized the ordinary peasantry.

Communist influence in Kashmir's politics had been visible since 1937 in the various trade unions later appropriated by the National Conference. However, communists found it difficult to penetrate religious Kashmiri society. Instead of starting a party branch in the state, it seemed prudent to infiltrate established student and political bodies like the Student Federation, Youth League, and the National Conference.[135] Communist activity in the Valley increased during the Second World War, especially after the Russo-German alliance against the Allies. The British government in India was suspicious of communist leaders' activities, forcing some to take refuge in the Valley. Niranjan Nath Raina, a Kashmiri Hindu trained at different communist centers in India, succeeded in organizing the "Study Circle" and the "Free Thinkers Association," a nuclei of local intellectuals who met to discuss and debate Marxism and Leninism in the context of Kashmir. The New Kashmiri Bookshop became a venue for the distribution of Marxist literature to educated Kashmiris.[136] In the mid-1940s, however, communist

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influence was most visible in the National Conference's *Naya Kashmir*, or "New Kashmir," manifesto. Abdullah presented a blueprint for a free Kashmir where peasants would be masters of their own lands and have the power to shape their own destinies. This vision, Abdullah hoped, would bring both peasantry and laborers into the fold of the National Conference.[137]

In the years leading up to 1947, the National Conference addressed economic issues faced by the masses, promised progressive social change, and proved itself a dynamic agent of political mobilization in rural Kashmir, as compared to the more stagnant and elitist Muslim Conference. In 1944, party delegates adopted the Bolshevist-inspired *Naya Kashmir* to explain the meaning of freedom to peasants and laborers. The manifesto provided a new vision for modern Kashmir. In its introduction, Abdullah paid tribute to Russia for demonstrating not merely theoretically but practically that "real freedom takes birth only from economic emancipation." The manifesto laid out the concept of popular sovereignty, noting that if sovereignty lies with the people, then states cannot ignore the aspirations of the masses. It then provided a constitutional framework for a free Kashmir: a representative legislature called the National Assembly, a cabinet government, and decentralized governance in the subregions.[138] However, its most significant points related to the abolition of feudal structures, especially land grants. It promised that land would be taken away from landlords without compensation and distributed among peasants. The concluding section elaborated on social schemes, including a charter for the rights of women. In sum, this document defined emancipation as political rights, economic freedom, and social justice.[139]

Socialist and communist currents seeped into the mainstream imagination of poets, writers, and intellectuals as they conceived a forthcoming revolution. Nationalists could explain the contents of *Naya Kashmir* to the peasantry in public forums organized for other purposes. Community gatherings around shrines or religious fairs became an important medium for making economic freedom part of the public dialogue. Literary discourse in Kashmir now centered on economic disparities and social discontent, imploring Kashmiris to end the feudal hierarchies that separated the rich from the poor. In one poem, Ghulam Mahjoor wrote:

> Oh, workers and peasantry, unite
> Seek rights, leave begging and praying to Jagirdars
> Stand to break the chains of obsolete customs and conventions
> Be not melancholic, brothers rejoice
> We shall soon be free,
> Freedom shall bring prosperity
> We shall soon be free[140]

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The idea of deeding land to its tiller made Abdullah extremely popular among the peasantry. He sought to make the National Conference a party of laborers and peasants, rather than of a rich elite. To ingratiate himself with this base, Abdullah adopted a red flag, signifying labor, with a plough representing the Kashmiri peasantry. The popular slogan "when the plough moves it tears the enemy apart" fired the imagination of the masses. In a 1945 speech, Abdullah rejoiced:

> An agitation is launched against the National Conference that it is supported only by the workers, the laborers, the peasants, and the poor. Its opponents claim that they are supported by the aristocratic classes and the big capitalists. I am extremely happy to know that our opponents have now realized the truth that we (National Conference) have hungry and naked peasants and toiling masses with us, while big capitalists feed themselves on the sweat and blood of these hungry and naked Kashmiris.[141]

The *Naya Kashmir* manifesto drew criticism from both Muslim Conference elites and Kashmiri Pandits, who each opposed the socialist promise of "land to the tiller." The Kashmiri Pandit community further rejected *Naya Kashmir* as a "communal" document prepared without consulting the state's minorities. They refused to accept any assembly or government in which one community, on the basis of its majority strength, could dominate the minority. Kashmiri Pandit leadership pointed out that Muslims had persistently demanded a change in the cow slaughter law and the Hindu law of inheritance. The National Conference's opposition to Hindi as a medium of instruction was another example of their "communal approach." Kashmiri Pandits, however, would support a government under the aegis of the maharaja, within which Muslims and non-Muslims would have equal power. The Kashmiri Hindu community continued to believe that a Muslim-majority government would jeopardize their cultural and economic interests.[142]

The *Naya Kashmir* manifesto faced its strongest challenge from individuals like Prem Nath Bazaz, who succeeded in organizing peasant resistance against the National Conference in 1945 and 1946. After his fallout with Abdullah over the scripts controversy, Bazaz distanced himself from the ideologies of nationalism and communalism, which he considered exclusionary and sources of division. Instead, M. N. Roy's radical humanism, which sought rationality and critical analysis of modes of domination, inspired Bazaz to seek to create a healthy society of morally and spiritually liberated individuals, as a fundamental requirement for Kashmir's progress.[143] Such a humanistic society would be a spiritual community "not limited by the boundaries of nationalism, capitalism, or fascism."[144]

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Bazaz reached out to the literate classes in rural Kashmir, and in 1946 he formed the Jammu and Kashmir Kissan Conference to propagate "scientific education on politics"—free from the "taints of communalism and nationalism"—to the masses.[145] Presided over by Abdul Salam Yatu, a young educated Kashmiri peasant from Anantnag, its goal was to alter the existing social order.[146] Although the National Conference claimed to represent the "toiling masses," it was led by elites. On the contrary, the Kissan Conference claimed to be the true representative of the masses, drawing both its supporters and its leaders from the peasantry. The Kissan Conference emphasized the struggle to free Kashmiris from the bondage of "indigenous feudalism and capitalism." To usher in a new society, it was imperative to maintain distance from the elite-driven politics of the Muslim League and the Congress Party. Only when Kashmiris had attained the twin objectives of social equality and economic justice would they decide whether they wanted to "preserve the unity of the country or divide it."[147] The growing popularity of the Kissan Conference in certain areas of rural Kashmir made National Conference leaders bitter toward the new party. Notorious for their lack of tolerance for any opposition, the National Conference disrupted Kissan Conference meetings and harassed its supporters.

As challenges to the domination of the National Conference increased, Abdullah turned to revolutionary rhetoric to regain mass popularity.[148] In 1946, he submitted a memorandum to the Cabinet Mission sent by the British government to India to evolve a formula, with the consent of both the Congress and the Muslim League, for a transfer of power to Indians. The memorandum demanded not only the establishment of a responsible government in the state of Jammu and Kashmir, but the right to "absolute freedom from autocratic rule of the Dogra house."[149] It added that the Dogra ruler had no moral right to rule over the people of Kashmir because the East India Company had sold them, along with the territory of Kashmir, to Gulab Singh for seventy-five lakh rupees.[150] After the British withdrew from India, the memorandum insisted, "sovereignty must revert to the people and not to the state ruler." This rhetoric reappeared the same year in Abdullah's Quit Kashmir movement, which centered on the injustices suffered by Kashmiris at the hands of successive foreign dynasties that had treated them like slaves.[151] Every speech condemned Dogra rule as alien, comparable to that of the Sikhs, Pathans, and Mughals. Abdullah implored Kashmiris to break the chains of slavery and emerge free and victorious. This revolutionary rhetoric, representing the regional aspirations of Kashmiri-speaking Muslims, appealed to people's sentiments and turned the tide of public opinion in the Valley in favor of the National Conference. The Dogra government, less enthused, arrested Abdullah and curbed the Quit Kashmir resistance with arrests, injuries, and deaths.[152]

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During this phase of repression, the Muslim Conference initially pursued a policy of outright opposition to the Quit Kashmir movement, asserting that the Congress Party was guiding the movement.[153] Ironically, the movement that the Muslim Conference was condemning as "Congress inspired" received complete support from the pro-Pakistan Muslim press of Punjab. Maulana Zafar Ali Khan, a prominent member of the Muslim League, wrote a poem in praise of the Quit Kashmir movement in the *Zamindar*, an Urdu newspaper published from Lahore.

> It is once again the season of arrests
> And once again, Kashmir's wound has become fresh
> The air is resonating once again with the clang of chains
> In which are drowned the shouts of "God is great!"[154]

To prove that the Muslim Conference was just as defiant against the Dogra regime as the National Conference, Chaudhry Ghulam Abbas conducted an annual session of the party at Srinagar in October 1946, despite a government ban on holding such meetings. This led to mass arrests of Muslim Conference leaders, removing them from the political stage at a critical time in Kashmir's history.[155] The state's Hindu community, meanwhile, also resisted the Quit Kashmir movement,[156] especially Abdullah's interpretation of the Treaty of Amritsar as a "sale deed" that allowed the Dogras to illegitimately control Kashmir's territory. The general secretary of the All State Kashmiri Pandit Conference, Shiv Narayan Fotedar, considered this a misstatement of historical facts. The sum paid to the English East India Company by Gulab Singh, he argued, was in the form of war indemnity, and thus could not be considered a sale deed. Fotedar emphasized that Pandits did not consider the maharaja an autocrat but in fact found the state of Jammu and Kashmir more progressive and constitutionally advanced than other Indian princely states.[157]

Even Congress leaders did not support the Quit Kashmir movement, since it aimed to remove a Hindu ruler from power. The press in India condemned the movement as reckless and ill-conceived.[158] The Congress Party distanced itself from Abdullah and pressed him to call off this "mischievous move" against the Dogra monarchy. Jawaharlal Nehru was the only Congress leader who condemned the repressive Dogra administration and offered complete support to the Quit Kashmir movement. But Nehru clarified that his support for Quit Kashmir stemmed from his emotional bonds with Kashmir due to his Kashmiri heritage, rather than from the Congress Party's policies.[159]

Clearly, though the Congress did not generally support him, Nehru was aware that in any future political agreement between Kashmir and India, Abdullah's

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support remained critical. Nehru addressed several letters and telegrams to the maharaja, impressing upon him the need to release Abdullah. He personally went to the Valley, despite a ban on his entry by state authorities, and in a symbolic gesture appeared in a trial court as a lawyer to defend Abdullah. Despite this robust defense, Abdullah was jailed for three years, and the National Conference remained a banned and suppressed organization until India's independence.[160] Events moved quickly, however. By the time of the Indian Independence Act, partition had become an imminent fact. While the creation of India and Pakistan consumed the South Asian subcontinent in a religious frenzy, Abbas and Abdullah, the two Kashmiri political rivals, remained incarcerated.

Revolt, Violence, and Tribal Invasion: The Beginning of the Sovereignty Dispute

The partition of the South Asian subcontinent enhanced tensions between the inhabitants of the princely state of Jammu and Kashmir divided along religious, linguistic, and regional lines, who claimed multiple visions for free Jammu and Kashmir. There was a great degree of ambiguity about the future status of Jammu and Kashmir; the leadership seemed uncertain whether to align with India, Pakistan, or remain independent. While the Valley's print media expounded the idea of freedom to include spiritual regeneration, social justice, and economic reconstruction, the violence and bloodshed that accompanied partition made it difficult for communities to ignore the new political constructs of India and Pakistan, both eyeing Kashmir's territory with vested interests.

In August 1947, the existence of 565 princely states, which covered 48 percent of India's territory and which despite lacking external sovereignty had enjoyed freedom to rule arbitrarily in their states during British rule, created a new set of complications. The Congress feared that the lapse of British paramountcy over the princely states could lead to the balkanization of India, as some princely states might assert their right to opt out of the union. India therefore decided to forego full independence and accept dominion status within the British Commonwealth, foreclosing the option of independence for the princely states.[161]

Lord Mountbatten, in a special session of the Chamber of Princes on July 25, 1947, explained to the princes that the Indian Independence Act released "the states from all their obligations to the crown," technically making them independent. However, he urged the princes to accede to either India or Pakistan on issues of defense, foreign affairs, and communications; maintaining national security and foreign relations would prove an arduous and financially crippling endeavor

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for the small princely states.[162] As most of these were landlocked within India, Mountbatten strongly suggested that the princes should accept the Congress's accession offer, which left the rulers "with great internal authority while divesting them of subjects they could not deal with on their own."[163]

Sardar Patel, the deputy prime minister of independent India, along with V. P. Menon, a secretary at the Ministry of States, worked tirelessly to persuade princes to integrate with India by providing them with large annual privy purses, permitting retention of titles and property, and appointing some as *rajpramukh*s—the equivalent of governors in the newly created Indian union.[164] Once all the princely states had acceded on defense, foreign affairs, and communication, India amended the instrument of accession and established direct control.[165] In most cases, the geographical location of the princely state predetermined the decision. In states that bordered both new countries, the princes took population composition into consideration.[166] However, the princely state of Jammu and Kashmir posed special challenges. It was the only princely state geographically contiguous with both India and Pakistan where a Hindu house ruled over a Muslim-majority population.

On the advice of his ministers, Maharaja Hari Singh agreed that the princely state of Jammu and Kashmir should be independent, as accession to either of the new nation-states would have cost him his throne. This vision of an independent Jammu and Kashmir created considerable apprehensions for Nehru and the Congress. Jammu and Kashmir had become a symbol of the Congress's secular ideal, a refutation of the two-nation theory of Jinnah and his Muslim League.[167] By showing that a Muslim-majority area was prepared to remain in India of its own free will, Nehru could demonstrate the validity of the Congress position; so he was very keen to mold the maharaja's thinking.[168] However, the maharaja avoided making any final decision. Instead, he signed a standstill agreement with Pakistan in August 1947, obligating Pakistan to supply food and other necessities. The maharaja's request for a "similar agreement with India was neither accepted nor rejected."[169] His subjects, however, representing different communities and sub-regions, expressed strong and differing desires about their political future after the termination of British paramountcy.

In defining their visions of freedom at the moment of independence, public discourse in the Valley focused on the concepts of social justice and economic equity, rather than political association with either India or Pakistan. Kashmiri poets wrote inspiring poems hoping for the transformation of exploitative feudal structures within Jammu and Kashmir and the creation of social justice for the downtrodden. Some poets equated freedom with an end to "religious bigotry" and

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asked Kashmiris to usher in a new society, where "religion" would not become a tool to create dissension and keep the poor subjugated. In a "crusade against religious fanaticism," the famous Kashmiri poet Abdul Ahad Azad wrote:

> In this vast expanse of oneness, who is my kin and who is stranger to me;
> A Muslim is to me as good as a Hindu
> My *deen* (religion) is fraternity, my *dharma* (faith) is oneness,
> My light is meant for one and all….[170]

At the same time, *Hamdard* urged Kashmiris to broaden their definitions of "freedom" beyond the limited notions of "nationalism" and "communalism" articulated by the rival Congress and Muslim League, since both ideologies had created discord, rather than unity.[171] Prem Nath Bazaz urged Kashmiris to strive for "human freedom," based on self-reliance and open mindedness. Real emancipation, Bazaz argued, would allow critical understanding of political issues and free Kashmiris from bias and prejudice. To gain real freedom, with equal rights for all communities, Kashmiris should demonstrate patriotism toward their homeland but distance themselves from any nationalism that breeds "inequality, excludes minorities, and deprives people of legitimate rights."[172]

Other *Hamdard* articles emphasized that political freedom, even if guaranteed constitutionally, could not last long without economic freedom. Despite natural resources like timber, water, and minerals which gave Kashmir immense development potential, the region suffered from economic backwardness. One editorial agreed that the abolition of land grants suggested by the National Conference's *Naya Kashmir* manifesto would reduce poverty. However, the author disagreed with the National Conference's plan to nationalize land and industries, which would concentrate power in fewer hands and create a totalitarian regime. Such experiments in Russia's industrial sector had not portended freedom, the author argued, but necessitated ruthless administration and the denial of political and democratic rights to dissidents. Nationalization had made the dictatorship of the proletariat into the dictatorship of the communist party. The author also, however, expressed his antipathy for capitalist economies that exploit workers and benefit the rich. Instead he suggested a "co-operative economy," with decentralized political and economic structures, to ensure equity and justice.[173]

The economic and social aspects of freedom also dominated *Khidmat*, the official mouthpiece of Abdullah's National Conference. Instead of taking a clear-cut position about the state's political future, Abdullah appeared ambivalent, asking Kashmiris to focus instead on economic freedom. Abdullah's political views on partition found expression in a series of articles he wrote in 1946. One

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of these, "Thoughts on Pakistan," considered the idea of a separate Muslim-majority area a fallacy; it would not rescue Muslims from Hindu domination. The creation of Pakistan would attenuate the Muslim minority problem, as "crores of Muslims living in the Hindu majority states of UP, CP, Bihar and Madras could not be forced to migrate to Pakistan." Internal differences within the South Asian Muslim community, based on regional differences of language and culture, Abdullah stated, would never allow Pakistan to emerge strong. He also expressed deep concerns about Pakistan's economic feasibility, arguing that "Pakistan would be poor compared to the inhabitants of Hindustan with less chances of betterment, living at best on religious ego." At the same time, he blamed "the Hindu cultural orientation of the Congress" for its insensitivity to Muslim cultural sensibilities and for excluding them from power-sharing arrangements, acts which had precipitated feelings of distrust and fear among Indian Muslims and led to the demand for Pakistan.[174]

During the immediate pre-partition period Abdullah was heavily influenced by communists and adopted their stated position of neutrality on the Congress and the Muslim League. The emphasis on compromise appealed to him. In another article, "Way Out," he laid out a "rational solution" that would not jeopardize the interests of India's minorities. He championed popular regional urges, emphasizing the importance of the right to self-determination for all nationalities inhabiting India. Granting this right would eliminate the possibility of a constitutional solution on communal lines. "This right can be conceded after territorial re-division of the provinces on scientific basis with due regard to linguistic and cultural homogeneity of each unit," he wrote. Overall, Abdullah was not in favor of partition, and considered the best solution to be a loose federation within which provinces would be able to retain their autonomy.[175] Once Pakistan became a reality, however, he faced a dilemma about which course of action to adopt in Muslim-majority Kashmir. Abdullah had a friendly relationship with the Congress, but he understood many Kashmiri Muslims were hesitant about a close association with Nehru's India. Abdullah's personal animosity for Jinnah, who had criticized Abdullah's National Conference during his visit to the Valley in 1942, added to his concerns, as he was unsure how their relationship would unfold if Kashmir became a part of Pakistan. Most significantly, Abdullah remained skeptical about whether the Muslim League, a party dominated by landed elites, would ever allow *Naya Kashmir*'s promise of "land to the tiller" to become a reality.

This ambiguity was reflected in Abdullah's famous speech at Hauzari Bagh in September 1947. Abdullah laid three options before Kashmiris: India, Pakistan, and independence. The right to decide the future status of Jammu and Kashmir,

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Abdullah vociferously argued, rested with the people. “If Jammu and Kashmir State is bypassed,” Kashmiris would raise a “banner of revolt and we shall face a struggle.” At the same time, he advised the masses to support whichever nation-state would recognize Kashmir’s “sovereignty.” [176] While the thrust of his speech was clearly pro-India, he disagreed with the Congress’s centralizing impulse and supported the right of the people to choose independence, if accession appeared unattractive to them. Abdullah’s hesitation in adopting a clear-cut approach on the question of accession stemmed from the insecurities that gripped Kashmiri Muslims about their fate in Hindu-majority India in the aftermath of the bloodbath accompanying partition. Abdullah wanted these raw emotions and fears to abate before making any “practical” decision about Kashmir’s future.

During these uncertain times, *Khidmat* proved an effective platform for Abdullah. One editorial, “Choosing the Alternative,” impressed upon all three powers—the Congress, the Muslim League, and the maharaja—that voices of Kashmiris needed to be heard on the question of accession. Abdullah appealed to Kashmiri Muslims to unite in their basic demand: the right to self-determination to mold their own destiny. He even expressed a desire for an “independent” Kashmir to prevent rich Indian and Pakistani capitalists from taking over Kashmir’s territory. “National Conference would resist Kashmir being parceled into *Mamdot* estates and *Noon* zamindaris [capitalist families in Pakistan] or its rich resources being exploited by *Birlas* or *Dalmias* [capitalist families in India],” Abdullah wrote.[177] He called for a transitional stage of political development, in which the state would, at least temporarily, accede to neither India nor Pakistan.

Abdullah subtly used his slogan “freedom before accession” as a bargaining chip to secure autonomous status for Kashmir. He expressed a willingness to think about Kashmir’s accession to Pakistan if it were guaranteed complete internal autonomy. However, Muhammad Ali Jinnah’s indifference to the National Conference leaders at this critical time convinced Abdullah that Pakistan would never grant Kashmir autonomous status.[178] On the other side of the equation, the close personal and political relationship between Nehru and Abdullah convinced the National Conference leader that Nehru’s India would provide Kashmir with greater autonomy within the Indian Union than Pakistan would. However, these were Abdullah’s personal views, which did not necessarily reflect the viewpoint of the entire Muslim community. In general, Abdullah’s supporters lacked a clear sense of belonging to either India or Pakistan, though most were willing to follow his lead due to the respect he had derived from enduring long prison sentences for resisting Dogra autocracy.

Some Kashmiris who supported the Muslim Conference had a different vision for Kashmir’s political future, preferring accession to Pakistan, but as before the

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party lacked leadership to give it a cohesive voice or direction. In the Valley, the Muslim Conference support base remained primarily in urban Srinagar, while in Jammu the party had a powerful presence.[179] The inability of the Muslim Conference to create a grass root movement in the larger Valley reinforced Nehru's conviction that Abdullah's National Conference was the dominant party in the state. Furthermore, the Muslim League's policy of non-interference in the internal affairs of the princely states hampered the growth of the Muslim Conference, in contrast with the Congress's active involvement with the National Conference. In a letter to K. H. Khurshid, the private secretary to the president of the Muslim League, a member of the Muslim Students Union at Srinagar complained, "Kashmiri Muslims long for the guidance of the League but they are dismayed. Pakistan needs Kashmir and we need Pakistan. But the fight for it must begin now. Thus, the policy of non-interference is beyond my understanding."[180] Despite these complaints, the Muslim League continued the same policy in Kashmir as it had adopted in the other princely states, possibly confident that Muslim-majority Jammu and Kashmir would inevitably accede to Pakistan.

The Muslim Conference had always supported the Pakistan movement of the Muslim League, yet in May 1947 its leadership seemed strangely uncertain about the state's political future. In a press release on May 10, 1947, Chaudhry Hamidullah, the president of the Muslim Conference, urged the maharaja "to declare Kashmir independent." The Muslim Conference offered the maharaja full cooperation in establishing a separate constituent assembly to frame the state constitution according to the wishes of the people. The maharaja would be the first constitutional ruler of the new independent and democratic Kashmir.[181] Only when it seemed that the Congress was putting pressure on the maharaja to accede to India, rather than remain independent, did the Muslim Conference veer to the viewpoint that Kashmir should accede to Pakistan in matters relating to defense, communications, and foreign affairs.

While Valley Muslims were ambiguous about their sense of belonging, whether to India, Pakistan, or an independent Kashmir, Muslims living in the western parts of Jammu province, closer to the borders of Punjab, had different political experiences. The violence unleashed by partition led to killings and mass migrations on both sides of the India–Pakistan border. In Jammu armed groups representing Hindu rightist organizations like the Rashtriya Swayamsevak Sangh (RSS) retaliated against Muslims after Punjabi Hindu refugees arrived in Jammu with harrowing accounts of murder and rape. The presence of armed Sikh and RSS bands in Jammu gave credence to theories that the maharaja wanted to eliminate the state's Muslims to ensure accession to India.[182] Indeed, starting in

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September 1947 violence against Jammu Muslims quickly led to migrations to Pakistan. Some Jammu Muslims fled to Poonch and Mirpur, creating another communal backlash—this time by Muslims against Hindus and Sikhs. The communal situation in Jammu was exacerbated by repressive measures adopted by the maharaja, including arrests of local politicians, censorship, and the general stifling of debate. However, it was the *jagir* of Poonch, a Muslim-majority district in western Jammu, which became the focal point of resistance toward the Dogra state.[183]

The Dogra state's turbulent relationship with Poonch began in the 1830s, when Gulab Singh imposed Dogra rule by eliminating the local Muslim ruler, along with his family and supporters, and handing over the district to one of his close relatives. In 1925, the Dogra maharajas established direct control over Poonch and increased taxation, making life unbearable for ordinary people. No measures were taken to improve the condition of the peasantry, since the entire region was held as a land grant, while the land's actual cultivators were reduced to the position of serfs. The unproductive nature of the land, along with heavy taxes, forced Poonchis to search for work outside their *jagir*.[184] Its location, close to major military recruiting regions in Punjab such as Sialkot, encouraged them to enlist in the army. During the First World War, 31,000 men from Poonch and Mirpur served in the British Indian army. In the Second World War, almost 50,000 Poonchis served in the British army. In 1947, Muslim men in Poonch with military experience and training outnumbered the maharaja's armed forces.[185] After the Second World War, the discharged soldiers had returned home, but could not serve in the Dogra army due to laws against Muslim enlistment. The experience of Muslim Poonchis in the battlefields of Europe and West Asia provided them with both military training and access to firearms. The maharaja, fearing their military capabilities, asked Poonchis to disarm; although they complied with the order, Poonchis felt betrayed when the same weapons appeared in the hands of Hindus and Sikhs during the riots of 1947.[186]

In June 1947, the people of Poonch initiated a no-tax campaign: a civil disobedience movement in response to the maharaja's imposition of numerous taxes on the already overburdened peasantry. The Dogra Raj's use of force to suppress this agrarian revolt proved unwise. A peasant revolt against feudal control rapidly developed into a Hindu–Muslim conflict, and the revolt assumed a "definite pro-Pakistan character." The Dogra state lost control over Poonch and its population, while the tribesmen of the North West Frontier Province, aided by Pakistan, entered the princely state to "liberate" Kashmir.[187] The October 1947 tribal invasion forced the maharaja to appeal to the Indian government for

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help. India reiterated that its military support would be forthcoming only if the princely state acceded to India.[188] On October 26, Maharaja Hari Singh signed an instrument of accession which was formally accepted by the Indian government.

The instrument spelled out the extent to which sovereignty was transferred from the state to the central government. While Jammu and Kashmir relinquished its control over defense, foreign affairs, and communication, it was to remain autonomous in all other respects. Moreover, Lord Mountbatten, the Governor General of India, added a proviso while accepting the instrument of accession. “It is my Government’s wish,” Mountbatten wrote, “that as soon as law and order has been restored in Kashmir and its soil cleared by the invaders the question of the state’s accession should be settled by reference to the people.”[189] Nehru also promised that the Indian government would withdraw its troops from Kashmir after restoring peace in the region, providing an opportunity for Kashmiris to decide their political future.[190] These events set the stage for the opening of India and Pakistan’s still-unresolved dispute over Kashmir.

Conclusion

Due to their long struggles under autocratic regimes which granted them few rights, the concept of freedom fascinated Kashmiris throughout the decades before independence. Although Kashmiris articulated a variety of visions for exactly how “freedom” would or should transform their social and economic structures, they generally sought a free society that valued good social relations, human dignity, religious tolerance, and compassion for the poor. Local adaptations of international ideologies shaped their emancipation movements to fit their regional environment, and plunged a range of Kashmiri voices into fierce debates over the concepts of socialism, communism, and nationalism. However, as I will explore in the next chapter, in the aftermath of partition, as Kashmir became embroiled in the sovereignty dispute between the newly created states of India and Pakistan, Kashmiri aspirations took a backseat as both new nations focused on territorial nationalism and strengthening their borders. India perceived Kashmiri self-determination as a threat to its territorial integrity, while the ideals of freedom conceived by Kashmiris prior to accession to India remained a distant dream. Instead of creating a society that could improve human relationships and lay the foundation for a strong future society, Kashmiris were confronted with a sociopolitical system that not only failed to redress their economic, political, and cultural grievances, but went out of its way to suppress free expression. Despite these challenges, Kashmiri yearnings for freedom remained strong; local poets

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penned verses expressing their deep desire to shape their own political destiny. Mirza Arif Beg wrote in 1947:

> Ourselves shall we set up a nation free;
> Ourselves shall we refashion the nation's fate!
> Our hearts have cherished the dreams of democracy!
> We have to turn Kashmir into a real paradise!
> We have to wash away the bolt of servility!
> Lo, there appears the sun of truth;
> And the ghost of falsehood melts away![191]

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