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Author(s): Ashutosh Varshney

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# INDIA, PAKISTAN, AND KASHMIR

## *Antinomies of Nationalism*

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Ashutosh Varshney

Ethnic, religious, and nationalist passions have returned to the agenda of world politics. The hope of intellectuals and statesmen at the turn of the 1950s was that a rising tide of rationality and modernization, in both liberal and Marxist variants, would sweep away these ascriptive identities that had led to such violence, bloodshed, and ruin. However, their expected erosion did not take place; rather, these passions have persisted and, it would be fair to say, have now gone beyond all expectations. Today, several societies—most dramatically, the Soviet Union and Yugoslavia—seem to be on the verge of ethnic disintegration, depending on how their politics and institutions are restructured. Serious ethnic assertion also marks a good deal of Eastern Europe, the Middle East, Africa, and South Asia.

Why are so many people in the world defining themselves in ethnic and religious terms? Although the problem is not fully understood, some minimal comparative observations can, nonetheless, be offered on the ethnic and nationalist revival of today, and it can be marked by at least four factors—two old, two relatively new. First, many ethnic groups cut across international boundaries that have been constructed to represent juridical statehood, or they are spread across regional boundaries within a nation-

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Ashutosh Varshney is Assistant Professor of Government and Faculty Associate, Center for International Affairs, Harvard University, Cambridge. The author would like to acknowledge that the field research in India upon which this article is based was funded by the Department of Government, Harvard University. The author would also like to note that research in an area of insurgency is not possible without the generous support of activists, political leaders, journalists, officials, and the Kashmiri people, who shared emotions and thoughts in countless conversations. Thanks is also extended to Bashiruddin Ahmed, Houchang Chehabi, Ashok Jaitley, Jaya Jaitley, Sunder Viswalingam, Myron Weiner, several Pakistani students at Brown and Harvard universities for comments and suggestions, and Nisha Kumar for admirable research assistance. The author is solely responsible for the analysis.

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state. Such groups (Kurds, Tamils, and Muslims in South Asia, several nationalities in Eastern Europe and the Soviet Union) seem either to demonstrate the most virulent form of nationalism or are objects of a terrible nationalist repression. Second, partisan intellectuals and leaders are reconstructing national histories with a litany of interethnic charges, either with tales of broken promises or stories of ethnic ingratitude. Through selective retrieval, tales of betrayal are threatening to push out a shared heritage of communal coexistence from collective memories. Hindu nationalists prefer to recall Babar and Aurangzeb, the intolerant Moghul rulers, rather than Akbar, the tolerant one. Sikh militants point to the betrayal of Hindus in 1951 when they gave up their mother tongue, Punjabi; few refer to the fact that it was once common for two sons in the same family to be a Sikh and a Hindu. Sinhala nationalists speak of how Tamils corrupted their original Buddhist land; centuries of Sri Lankan history are, however, full of Sinhala-Tamil coexistence.

Two new factors are giving marked virulence to these traditional attributes of ethnic struggle. Deadly weapons are plentifully available in many parts of the world, making ethnicity—and the response to it—more brutal in unprecedented ways. The violence raises serious concerns of civil rights in some circles and equally serious considerations of order and national integrity in the decision-making realms. Secondly, the spread of information technology—television and videos—imparts a new emotional intensity that is not the same as reading or hearing about one's own community on an insurgency path or in watching security forces roll it back. Kashmiri militants show videos of the paramilitary crackdown; Hindu nationalists film the police firing on activists trying to "liberate" Lord Ram's birthplace and then the film is commercially released. With today's technology, "imagined communities," to borrow Benedict Anderson's evocative phrase, have come to exist more easily than before and with greater intensity.

The Kashmir problem, which goes back to the partition of India in 1947, shares these properties of the new ethnicity. Kashmir is a disputed territory between India and Pakistan with one-third of the original state of Jammu and Kashmir (J&K) now with Pakistan and two-thirds with India. Kashmir has twice in the past led India and Pakistan to war, in 1947 and 1965, respectively. An armed insurgency in 1990 once again brought the two traditional foes very close to war, and most Indian, if not Pakistani, observers would argue that a low-intensity war has been underway since December 1989 in the Kashmir valley. Moreover, events have come full circle; in August 1947, Kashmir, a Muslim-majority state, refused to join Pakistan. In October 1947 following Hindu-Muslim violence in Poonch District at the border, thousands of well-armed Pathan tribals from the

Northwest Frontier Province (NWFP) decided to “liberate” Kashmir by force. To save his embattled princely state, the maharaja of Kashmir signed a treaty of accession with India, and the National Conference, the most popular political organization in Kashmir, supported that decision to accede to India and resisted the invaders. India’s army pushed the invaders back.

Four decades later, the equations in Kashmir have changed drastically. For the first time since 1947, an armed insurgency has erupted in the Kashmir valley. To India’s embarrassment, Kashmiris are now fighting India’s security forces, not Pakistan-backed invaders. In a place known for its quietist, syncretistic Islam, militant Islamic fundamentalism has acquired a foothold. A valley so exquisite as to be “almost above human desire,” as Nehru described it, has of late been burning, its beauty charred by a savage destruction of life and property. The fire of nationalism, ethnicity, and religion has consumed over 2,000 lives.

This article deals with two sets of issues about Kashmir. First, why do India and Pakistan always fight over Kashmir? What do they want and why can’t they understand that the Kashmiris, both Hindus and Muslims, are grievously suffering? Secondly, what explains the transformation of battle in Kashmir—from 1947 (and again in 1965) when the Indian army and Kashmiris jointly fought Pakistan—to now when Kashmiris fight the Indian armed forces?

### The Argument: Antinomies of Nationalism

At its core, the Kashmir problem is a result of three forces: religious nationalism represented by Pakistan, secular nationalism epitomized by India, and ethnic nationalism embodied in what Kashmiris call *Kashmiriat* (being a Kashmiri). Each side accuses the other of duplicity; however, internal inconsistencies, contradictions, and paradoxes mark all three.

*Religious nationalism.* Pakistan was born with the argument that Hindus and Muslims were not only two different religious communities but also two separate nations. Kashmir, being a Muslim majority state, Pakistan believed, should have come to it at the time of partition. Two paradoxes have created problems for Pakistan. First, its founder, M. A. Jinnah, had argued that the rulers of the princely states, not the masses ruled by them, would decide which of the two new nation-states they would join. However, neither the maharaja of Kashmir nor the National Conference (that among other things was fighting the maharaja’s rule), opted for Pakistan. Many Kashmiris fought Pakistan vigorously. Sheikh Abdullah and the National Conference rejected the two-nation theory unequivocally: “I and

my organization never believed in the formula that Muslims and Hindus form separate nations. We did not believe in the two-nation theory, not in communalism or communalism itself. . . . We believed that religion had no place in politics."<sup>1</sup>

Secondly, 65 million Muslims joined the two wings of Pakistan in 1947, but 35 million were left behind in India. This number has grown to be almost 100 million by now, whereas the number of Muslims in the state of Jammu and Kashmir is a mere 4 million. If Pakistan tries to liberate Kashmir, or if Kashmir breaks away with its help, Pakistan runs the risk of endangering the welfare of 100 million Muslims in India. If political and civil rights were always viewed as *individual* rights, a Muslim outside Kashmir should not be affected by what Kashmiri Muslims do. Unfortunately, rights are also viewed by the populace as *group entitlements*, not only in India but also elsewhere. Willynilly, because of the way Pakistan was carved out of India to represent a Muslim homeland, Indian Muslims became implicated in Pakistan's actions. If popular perceptions matched the liberal notion of rights, that would not be true. An inevitable nationalist cry, however, is: how many times will India be partitioned due to the so-called Muslim Question? Muslims of pre-1947 India already have two homelands, Pakistan and Bangladesh. Would Kashmir be a third? Ultimately, the breakup of nation-states is not a rational question. Reason collapses on the bedrock of emotions. Nation-states get *embodied*; to many people, their breakup, therefore, feels like a limb tearing apart.

Several non-Kashmiri Indian Muslims made explicit arguments about the implications of Pakistan's actions in Kashmir. In a memorandum submitted to the United Nations as far back as 1951, 14 distinguished Indian Muslims argued:

Pakistan has made our position weaker by driving out Hindus from Western Pakistan in utter disregard of the consequences of such a policy to us and our welfare. . . . Such a policy must inevitably, as the past has already shown, result in the uprooting of Muslims in this country. . . .

It is a strange commentary on political beliefs that the Muslims of Pakistan who would like the Muslims of Kashmir to join them invaded the State, in October 1947. . . . In its oft-proclaimed anxiety to rescue the 3 million Muslims from what it describes as the tyranny of a handful of Hindus in the (Jammu and Kashmir) State, Pakistan evidently is prepared to sacrifice the interests of 40 million Muslims in India—a strange exhibition of concern for the welfare of fellow Muslims. Our misguided brothers in Pakistan do not realize that if Muslims in Pakistan can wage a war against Hindus in Kashmir, why should not Hindus, sooner or later, retaliate against Muslims in India? . . .

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1. Sheikh Abdullah's statement to the Security Council, official records, 3rd year, nos. 16-35, 241st meeting, 3rd item, pp. 16-27, February 6, 1948.

Does Pakistan seriously think that it could give us any help if such an emergency arose? It is incapable of providing room and livelihood to the 40 million Muslims of India should they migrate to Pakistan. Yet, its policy and action . . . may well produce [that] result.<sup>2</sup>

Although only anticipated in 1951 by these Muslim intellectuals, a Hindu nationalist upsurge is a political reality today. Moreover, those who left India for Pakistan in 1947 are called *muhajirs* (refugees) in Pakistan. Arguing that they are discriminated against in the country they liberated, they have organized as a separate party in Pakistan. In a very real sense there is no place left for India's Muslims in Pakistan. Kashmir thus threatens to make 100 million Muslims politically and emotionally homeless. It should not be surprising that Indian Muslims outside Kashmir have not supported the insurgency in Kashmir or that Imam Bukhari, a prominent religious leader of Muslims in India, has publicly stated that Kashmir is an integral part of India.<sup>3</sup> For Pakistan, thus, Kashmir continues to represent the unfinished business of partition. Since East Pakistan has already broken away, getting Kashmir back cannot but restore pride. Pakistan supports a plebiscite in Kashmir but not Kashmir's independence, even if Kashmiris want it. The only alternatives offered to the Kashmiris are: either India or Pakistan.

*Secular nationalism.* Led by the Congress Party, India's national movement never accepted the two-nation theory. Hindus and Muslims had separate religions but they were not distinct nations. Muslims were as much citizens of India as the Hindus. The secular nationalism of the Congress not only faced an ideological adversary in Muslim nationalism but also an intraparty rival in Hindu nationalism. Hindu nationalists did not object to Muslims living in India but rather argued that the Muslims would have to demonstrate their loyalty to India and also recognize that India was primarily a Hindu civilization. The Hindu nationalist faction was powerful but not powerful enough to subdue the secular ideology of the Congress. It could not win the battle for state formation. Hindu nationalists always lurked in the background, waiting for the opportunity to take control of

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2. This memorandum was submitted to Dr. Frank Graham, U.N. representative in Kashmir, on August 14, 1951. The signatories included Dr. Zakir Husain (then vice chancellor, Aligarh University; later president of India); Sir Sultan Ahmed (former member of the Governor General's Executive Council); Sir M. A. S. Khan (former acting governor of United Provinces and prime minister of the princely state of Hyderabad); Sir Mohammed Usman (vice chancellor, Madras University); Sir Iqbal Ahmed (former chief justice, Allahabad High Court), and nine other respected and highly placed Muslims.

3. "Preacher Politician," *India Today*, July 31, 1990. The only Muslim political leader of some standing to have disagreed with this position is Syed Shahabuddin. Cf. *Muslim India*, June 1990.

the Indian state. The voluntary decision of Muslim-majority Kashmir to join India bolstered the secular argument. Once part of India, however, Kashmir's decision to break away, if taken or successful, threatens to *empower* Hindu nationalism for it legitimates its main argument that Muslims are essentially disloyal to the country. The inevitable cry again is how many times would India be divided because of the Muslim Question?

Thus, the battle between secular and Hindu nationalism after independence came to be embodied in Kashmir, which led to a serious contradiction in the position taken by Nehru and his followers. Nehru argued that in order to maintain secularism in India and keep Hindu nationalism at bay, Kashmir must stay in India—if necessary, by force:

We have always regarded the Kashmir problem as symbolic for us, as it has far-reaching consequences in India. Kashmir is symbolic as it illustrates that we are a secular state. . . . Kashmir has consequences both in India and Pakistan because if we disposed of Kashmir on the basis of the two-nation theory, obviously millions of people in India and millions in East Pakistan will be powerfully affected. Many of the wounds that had healed might open out again.<sup>4</sup>

Nehru had in mind the wounds of partition, accompanied as it was by a quarter- to a half-million deaths and over 15 million migrations from either side of the border.

Nehru's fears, however, were not imaginary. In 1952, Hindu nationalists led a popular movement in Jammu against Kashmir's vacillations on full integration with India, and the wounds were reopened in the late 1980s. Nurtured by a widespread feeling among the Hindu middle classes that India's secular state has gone too far in appeasing minorities (Sikhs in Punjab and Muslims in Kashmir and Muslims in general), Hindu nationalism has gained remarkable strength in recent years. The attack on the mosque in Ayodhya in October 1990 and the rise of the Bharatiya Janata Party are examples of a deepening political trend, including the most widespread Hindu-Muslim rioting since 1947. Kashmiri nationalism may not entirely account for the rise of Hindu nationalism but, because of its history and context, substantially contributes to it and makes it difficult for the Indian state to deal with it generously. If Kashmir withdraws from the Indian union and a second partition of India takes place, the main beneficiaries will be Hindu nationalists.

Moreover, and this is the second contradiction, India's secular nationalism functions in a liberal democratic framework. Commitment to liberal principles was the reason Nehru offered a plebiscite to Kashmiris as a method of confirming a provisional accession. But nationalism soon de-

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4. Speech to Lok Sabha, September 17, 1953, *Parliamentary Debates*, 3:34, p. 3,995.

fined the limits of liberalism. If liberalism means freedom to organize and speak, does it also mean freedom to secede? Essentially, liberalism has no way of resolving this problem. If it does not let people secede even where there is a demand for secession, it means people in the disputed area are not free to choose their rulers. If it concedes freedom to secede, it becomes a lofty but bloodless principle for people outside the area of secession. Human beings are not simply disembodied individuals but also people attached to soil, a history, and a national pride. What good is liberalism if it cannot even protect the national boundaries and integrity because of the freedoms it offers? There is no escape from this question. A liberal democracy functions well when a nation has already been constructed; Kashmir exemplifies the helplessness of liberalism against nationalism.

Keeping Kashmir in India, thus, may have led to a tragedy, but letting Kashmir go, however, means a tragedy of greater magnitude—a possible Hindu-Muslim bloodbath and an invigorated attack on secularism. The prospect of ensuing nationwide violence frightens India's secular politicians and intellectuals. Not only is Kashmir a prisoner of the larger context; even those wanting communal peace in India have become a prisoner of Kashmir. A dreadful but real symbiosis is in operation here.

*Ethnic nationalism.* A complex of emotions has marked Kashmir's relations with India and Pakistan, and it is clearly dominated today by a desire for independence. Kashmiri nationalism,<sup>5</sup> however, has run into two objections about its consistency. First, if some of Kashmir's leaders did not choose Pakistan despite religious affinity but opted to stay with India on grounds of secularism, should it not also mean that Kashmiri nationalism is a subset of Indian nationalism and, therefore, Kashmir, with state-level autonomy, is part of the Indian federation? What justification might there be for an independent Kashmir except bad faith and opportunism—Kashmir, after all, was saved from Pakistan's occupation by India's army in 1947–48 and 1965? On the other hand, and this is the second problem, if the argument is that Kashmiri nationalism is incompatible with Indian nationalism, then how can two other ethnically different parts of the Kashmir state go with Kashmir? What is generally called Kashmir happens to be the state Jammu and Kashmir. J&K has three ethnically separable geographical regions—a Dogra Hindu-majority Jammu, a Muslim-majority

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5. For want of a more precise term, "Kashmiri nationalism" is being used here to analyze the feelings and politics of Muslims in the valley. Muslims in Jammu and "Azad Kashmir" are also called Kashmiris, but my arguments apply to valley Muslims, where the Indo-Pak battle has been the most intense. *Kashmiriat* has, on the whole, been both ethnic and secular. However, since it has tried to separate itself from India's secular nationalism, it is the ethnic aspect of *Kashmiriat* that has become its distinctive mark.



Kashmir, and a Tibetan Buddhist-majority Ladakh. If Kashmiri nationalism is not based on religion but on *Kashmiriat*, a separate Kashmiri ethnicity, then it has to be realized that ethnically the Buddhists in Ladakh are Tibetans, the Hindus of Jammu are Dogras, and the Muslims of Jammu are Punjabis. Moreover, Jammu is only a shade smaller than Kashmir, both nearly constituting two halves of the J&K state (Ladakh is tiny, in population terms, at least). An ethnic notion of independent Kashmir cannot carry the entire state without being internally inconsistent, particularly if non-Kashmiri groups do not wish to join such a state.

From 1947 until his death in 1982, Sheikh Abdullah, the most notable of Kashmir's leaders, embodied in his person the ironies of Kashmir. He fluctuated between accession to India and independence. As already noted, he explicitly rejected the two-nation theory. Even more important, Abdullah recognized the link between Kashmir's accession to India and India's secularism:

Certain tendencies have been asserting themselves in India, which may in the future convert it into a religious state wherein the interests of Muslims will be jeopardised. This would happen if a communal organisation had a dominant hand in the Government, and Congress ideals of the equality of all communities were made to give way to religious intolerance. *The continued accession of Kashmir to India should, however, help in defeating this tendency.* From my experience of the last four years, it is my considered judgment that the presence of Kashmir in the Union of India has been the major factor in stabilising relations between the Hindus and Muslims of India.<sup>6</sup>

Having seen this link, however, Abdullah later dithered. He asked, should Hindu nationalists triumph in the struggle for power in Delhi, would Kashmir be secure in India? "Many Kashmiris are apprehensive as to what will happen to them and their position if, for instance, something happens to . . . Nehru. . . . If there is a resurgence of communalism in India, how are we to convince the Muslims of Kashmir that India does not intend to swallow up Kashmir?"<sup>7</sup>

It is hard to see why Abdullah and secularists in Delhi were so afraid of Hindu nationalism, because it is clear in retrospect that, if anything, Hindu nationalism, after the fratricidal violence of 1947 and the assassination of Gandhi in 1948, declined in the 1950s. It is only in the 1980s that Hindu nationalism has risen to political visibility and strength. An ex-post perspective is, however, misleading, amounting to reading history backward. Those who participated in politics in the 1940s and saw the communal madness accompanying India's partition could not fully distance

6. Opening address to the Jammu and Kashmir Constituent Assembly, November 5, 1951.

7. Speech in Ranbirsinghpura, the *Times of India*, April 12, 1952.

themselves from their political socialization. If we wish to reconstruct the universe of how leaders behaved, an *ex-ante* perspective would make greater sense in which case the fact that Hindu nationalism declined in the 1950s is less important than the fact that political leaders were afraid it would rear up again. To fight Hindu nationalism, secularists like Nehru in Delhi needed Abdullah's unqualified support. In the end, a crippling paradox emerged. Abdullah was not sure of the longevity of secularism; his unequivocal faith was, however, required for imparting longevity to secularism. Kashmir has still not emerged from the dark shadow of this paradox.

Uncertainty about the future of secularism is not the only way to explain Abdullah's vacillations. It has often been argued that Abdullah was aiming at independence with the help of the British and Americans. Secularists often dismissed this proposition as a fantasy of the paranoid Hindu mind, but some declassified documents of the State Department give credence to the Hindu nationalist claim. Loy Henderson, U.S. ambassador in Delhi, wrote to the U.S. Secretary of State on September 29, 1950:

While in Kashmir, I had two secret discussions with Sheikh Abdullah . . . at his request. . . . He was vigorous in restating that in his opinion [Kashmir] should be independent; that an overwhelming majority population desired this independence; and that he had reason to believe that some Azad Kashmir leaders . . . would be willing to cooperate. . . . Kashmiri people could not understand why the UN consistently ignored independence as one of the possible solutions for Kashmir. . . .

When I asked Abdullah if he thought Kashmir could remain a stable independent country without [the] friendly support [of] India and Pakistan, he replied negative. In his opinion Kashmir could exist only in case both these countries had friendly relations with each other; and in [the] case [if the] U.S. through [the] UN . . . would enable it, by investments or other economic assistance. . . . There were so many areas of India in urgent need of economic development he was convinced Kashmir would get relatively little attention. Nevertheless, it would be preferable for Kashmir to go to India than to Pakistan. It would be disastrous for Kashmiris to be brought under control of [a] government with [a] medieval Koranic outlook.<sup>8</sup>

Abdullah's disapproval of Pakistan is, thus, consistent. But how does one interpret his equivocation between independence and integration? Possibly Abdullah was speaking the language of integration to Delhi and independence to Washington—precisely the kind of duplicity that, according to Hindu nationalists, was mindlessly ignored by Nehru. These texts should, however, be read with care. Did Abdullah dither on a full integra-

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8. *Foreign Relations of the United States*, vol. 5 (Washington, D.C.: Department of State, 1978), pp. 1,433–1,435.

TABLE 1 *Population of Jammu and Kashmir State, 1981\**

	<i>% of State Population</i>	<i>% Muslims</i>	<i>% Hindus</i>	<i>% Other</i>
Kashmir valley	3,134,904 (52.36%)	94.96	4.59	0.05
Jammu	2,718,113 (45.39%)	29.60	66.25	4.15
Ladakh	134,372 (2.24%)	46.04	2.66	51.30**
Total State	5,987,389 (100%)	64.19	32.24	3.57

SOURCE: Census 1981, Government of India.

NOTE: Percentages for 1951 were different in only one significant respect. The number of Muslims in Ladakh was much lower in the late 1940s.

\* 1991 census figure are not yet available.

\*\* Buddhist.

tion because he was unsure of Indian secularism or because of his hope that the Americans would support independence at some later date, and for the moment, he, therefore, had to position himself?

*The Jammu factor and Kashmiri nationalism.* The tripartite character of J&K (see Table 1) exposed Abdullah's contradictions even more sharply. Of the three parts, Jammu was the region in question. Jammu had nearly 45% of the state population, but in contrast to Kashmir valley, where Muslims were 95%, the Hindus in Jammu were nearly two-thirds of the population with the Muslims constituting roughly the other third. Abdullah had a solid popular base in the valley but not in Jammu. The Dogra Hindus in Jammu are ethnically different from Kashmiri Hindus in the valley, and the maharaja came from a Dogra family. Similarly, the Muslims in Jammu are ethnically different from the valley Muslims who, like the Hindus in Jammu, are more Punjabi than Kashmiri. Abdullah was not popular among the Jammu Muslims either. Another political organization, the Muslim Conference, represented Jammu Muslims. Most leaders of this organization had migrated to the Pakistani side of Kashmir after the partition.

When Sheikh Abdullah became the head of the J&K government upon the departure of the maharaja, power shifted from Jammu to the valley.

Thus emerged the Jammu factor in Kashmir politics, a factor not fully recognized, especially in international circles, but one that complicated the issues in Kashmir immeasurably. Jammu's political leaders had an unequivocal stand on the relationship with India: they wanted full and unconditional integration. On a basic issue, then, the two major areas of the state ran into a conflict. Abdullah could not have Jammu and subject it to Kashmiri hegemony while making an argument about Delhi not appreciating Kashmiri aspirations. This contradiction remains unresolved in 1991.

## Historical Evolution of the Kashmir Problem

### *Phase 1: Fateful Origins in Ambiguity, 1947–53*

The earliest developments are well known and can be briefly narrated here. At the time of partition, Jammu and Kashmir was a princely state. When the British decided to leave in 1947, the princely states were advised by the British to opt for a merger with India or Pakistan, although theoretically the option of independence was available. In deciding which country to choose, two principles were recommended: geographical contiguity and the religion of the majority community in the state. All except three of the princely states—Hyderabad, Junagarh, and J&K—decided to join India or Pakistan. From the perspective of religion, these three had a ruler-ruled paradox. Hyderabad and Junagarh had Muslim rulers but a Hindu majority. Moreover, neither was contiguous to Pakistan. India settled their accession by a combination of force and diplomacy. J&K had a Muslim majority and a Hindu ruler but three additional features. First, despite its Muslim majority, J&K had three very different areas merged into one state—Kashmir, Jammu, and Ladakh. Secondly, unlike Hyderabad and Junagarh, it was contiguous to Pakistan. Thirdly, a popular movement led by Sheikh Abdullah had developed against the autocratic rule of the maharaja. Because of its secular character, encompassing Hindus, Muslims, and Sikhs, Abdullah's movement was ardently supported by Gandhi and Nehru and, equally strongly, opposed by the Muslim League under Jinnah's leadership. When the maharaja did not join either India or Pakistan, Pathan tribesmen, later supported by the Pakistani army, invaded Kashmir. To obtain the help of India's armed forces, the maharaja signed a treaty of accession with Delhi. When a cease-fire was called in January 1949, the invaders, though beaten back, were still in control of one-third of Jammu and Kashmir; the cease-fire line, slightly redefined in 1973, holds today.

Incorporated into the Indian Constitution as Article 370, the treaty of accession made Delhi responsible for defense, foreign affairs, and commu-

nications; otherwise, J&K was autonomous. Moreover, Prime Minister Nehru offered that Kashmir's accession to India would be submitted to a popular referendum later. The promise of the plebiscite, however, would soon begin to haunt India.

It is, in retrospect, ironical that India took the lead in bringing the Kashmir issue to the U.N. on December 31, 1947. Nehru's purpose was to get the Security Council to censure "Pakistan's role in participating in or assisting the invasion."<sup>9</sup> To begin with, Pakistan denied official involvement, arguing that the tribals had undertaken the invasion themselves. Pakistan also argued that India was carrying out a genocide against J&K's Muslims, that it had secured the accession of Kashmir by fraud, and suggested that, since a pro-India government existed in Kashmir, a plebiscite in Kashmir should take place under U.N. supervision.<sup>10</sup> Representing Kashmir, Abdullah called Pakistan an aggressor in the Security Council.

India got the J&K government's support but not that of Britain and the United States. A U.N. Commission for India and Pakistan (UNCIP) was appointed to carry out the U.N. mandate in Kashmir. The commission reported on August 13, 1948, to the U.N. that "the presence of troops of Pakistan in the territory of Jammu and Kashmir constitutes a material change in the situation since it was last represented by the Government of Pakistan before the Security Council."<sup>11</sup> Before a plebiscite could be conducted, a two-part prior action was necessary, according to the UNCIP. In the first part, Pakistan should "secure the withdrawal from the state of Jammu and Kashmir of tribesmen and Pakistan nationals not normally resident therein who have entered the state solely for the purpose of fighting." In the second part, after "the tribesmen and Pakistani nationals . . . have withdrawn . . . [the] Government of India [will] begin to withdraw the bulk of its forces from that state in stages agreed upon with the Commission." Once both withdrawals were completed, a plebiscite would be held. The August 13, 1948, UNCIP resolution remained the bedrock of the UN's position on Kashmir for the next three decades. However, neither India nor Pakistan withdrew their forces, India claiming that Pakistan had to pull back first and Pakistan contending that there was no guarantee India would withdraw its forces.

Meanwhile, by 1951–52, the tripartite character of the Jammu and Kashmir state made the situation within it explosive. In November 1951,

9. Security Council documents, S/628, Indian complaint, January 2, 1948.

10. Sir Zafarullah Khan's reply on behalf of Pakistan, U.N. documents, S/PV 228–29, January 16–17, 1948, pp. 36–96.

11. UNCIP resolutions, S/1430, December 1949 (texts of the August 13, 1948, and January 5, 1949, resolutions). The January 5 resolution maintained a similar position regarding Pakistan troops. The citations below come from the text.

J&K's Constituent Assembly was elected but either the election papers of politicians opposed to the National Conference were found technically faulty or the opposition parties boycotted the election. The purpose of the Constituent Assembly was *inter alia*, to debate and politically settle the question of accession to India, ratify the land reform program (Abdullah had announced a radical one that would dispossess the landlords without compensation), and devise a constitution for the governance of the state. To Abdullah's lack of a political base in Jammu, three specific sources of discontent were added between 1950–52. First, his five-member cabinet had only one representative from Jammu, while in the Constituent Assembly, Jammu had only 29 out of 75 seats and the valley had 44. Second, the land reform program, even if intended by Abdullah to be entirely socio-economic, was viewed in communal terms. The reason simply was that most landlords in Kashmir were Hindus and most peasants Muslim. Third, suspicions about Abdullah's intentions were deepened by the emerging reports that in his dealings with the Western powers, he had expressed preference for Jammu and Kashmir as a sovereign independent state, not as a state fully acceded to India.<sup>12</sup>

By the middle of 1952, a popular movement emerged in Jammu against Abdullah led by the Praja Parishad, a Hindu regional party, and joined by the Jan Sangh, the Hindu nationalist party in Delhi. S. P. Mookerjee, president of the Jan Sangh, took a personal interest in the movement. Afraid that Jammu would forcibly come under Kashmiri domination, the Hindu nationalists argued for a full and irrevocable integration of the entire state with India. They questioned Sheikh Abdullah's motives by pointing to "inconsistencies" in his logic: if Sheikh Abdullah hated the two-nation theory and his principles were the same as those of Indian polity, then where was the ground for not accepting a full accession? Where was the need for a state constitution as distinct from a national one? Why should Abdullah retain the title of prime minister from the royal dynasty—if he had fought the princely system and already unseated the maharaja, other heads of state governments all over India were called chief ministers, and with the title prime minister reserved only for the head of the national government in Delhi? What was the rationale for continuing to have a separate state flag (as in the princely times) instead of a national flag, which all other Indian states had? Why should Article 370, giving the state a special status, exist even though other princely states had acceded fully without any special provisions? Indeed, wasn't Abdullah's argument about limited accession tantamount to saying that there were three

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12. Cf. Karan Singh, *Autobiography*, 1931–1967 (New Delhi: Oxford University Press, 1989), p. 121.

nations in India—Hindus, Muslims, and Kashmiris? Mobilization for the view was conducted through the highly symbolic and emotional slogan: *ek Pradhan, ek Nishan, and ek Vidhan* (one prime minister, one flag, and one constitution).

Soon thereafter, matters slipped beyond the control of both Nehru and Abdullah. Dissent against Abdullah in his party and cabinet was brewing. His position on India was eventually disowned by three of the four other members of his cabinet who wanted a fuller integration with India, which essentially meant support for the Parishad's stand too. Abdullah refused to resign and the order went out for his arrest. Abdullah remained in prison with few exceptions until 1968.<sup>13</sup> It was a remarkable twist of fate; in a matter of six years, Nehru's longtime friend and Delhi's trusted lieutenant in Kashmir, a Muslim who had attacked the very founding principles of Pakistan in the United Nations and supported India's secularism, languished in Indian jails. Delhi's embarrassment could not have been deeper.

*Phase 2: Imprisoned Ethnic Nationalism,  
Emasculated Religious Nationalism, and the  
Triumph of Secular Nationalism, 1953–83*

Sheikh Abdullah's arrest removed the most powerful exponent of Kashmiri nationalism from the political scene. His supporters formed a Plebiscite Front but it could not pose a serious challenge to Abdullah's successor, Bakshi Ghulam Mohammed. Even though he was a leading member of the National Conference, Bakshi was an advocate of a complete union with India. Delhi and Srinagar resumed a normal relationship at the governmental level, and to soothe any possible sense of injury in the valley, the government of India started pouring in developmental funds that would build roads, hospitals, schools, and bring in electricity. Over time, a combination of internal and external developments began to freeze the existing division of Kashmir. The third of J&K under Pakistan's control at the time of cease-fire, was brought increasingly under Pakistan's political control, whereas the Indian side of Kashmir went through a similar logic under Indian tutelage.

Externally, the insertion of the subcontinent into the Cold War was most significant. In effect, it made the UNCIP resolution irrelevant. In 1954–55 on grounds that Pakistan was on the periphery of the Soviet Union in the Middle East, the U.S. offered a security alliance to Pakistan. Pakistan accepted the deal, despite India's protests that the arms supplied

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13. In a political career lasting over 50 years, Abdullah was jailed nine times, six times by the maharaja of Kashmir before the partition of India and three times after that.

by the U.S. would be used against India, not the Soviet Union. Rather than pulling out troops from Kashmir, Nehru argued that Pakistan would actually bolster its armed forces in Kashmir. The Soviet Union seized the opportunity. Abstaining from the earlier Kashmir debates in the Security Council, it began supporting India's stand in the U.N. and, as a permanent member of the Security Council, could veto any resolution passed against India. On the other hand, Pakistan, who was receiving U.S. support, also did not have to pull out of Kashmir. The Security Council became irrelevant to a peaceful resolution of the Kashmir problem. A plebiscite did not take place because its prior conditions could not, and would not, be met.

Internally, the J&K Constituent Assembly approved a merger with India in early 1956. On March 29, Nehru withdrew the offer of a plebiscite on the three grounds that (1) for a plebiscite to take place under U.N. terms, Pakistan had first to withdraw its forces from J&K; (2) Kashmir's Constituent Assembly had approved the merger with India and accepted India's constitution; and (3) the insertion of the subcontinent into Cold War security alliances had changed the objective situation drastically, for it reflected Pakistan's desire to seek military solutions, something intolerable and a sign of bad faith, according to Nehru.<sup>14</sup> The second point represented a change in his position. To show his liberal credentials, Nehru in the early 1950s had rejected Abdullah's proposal that the Constituent Assembly should be taken as representing popular wishes, and its decision on the relationship with India should be deemed a legitimate substitute. Fortified by Soviet support in the Security Council and provided a reason by Pakistan's security alliance with the U.S., Nehru's nationalism edged out his liberalism.

Nehru's third point about Pakistan's military intentions toward Kashmir turned out to be prophetic. Persuaded by the British and Americans to resume negotiations with Pakistan on Kashmir, he did briefly try diplomatic solutions before his death in 1964. He secured the release of Abdullah from jail, and asked him to go to Pakistan to talk to President Ayub.<sup>15</sup>

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14. Nehru's speech in the Lower House of Parliament, March 29, 1956, also published as a pamphlet, "Kashmir Mein Lokmat Nahin" (No plebiscite in Kashmir) (Srinagar: Lala Rukh Publications, undated). In a resolution passed on December 2, 1957, the Security Council commented that the Kashmir Constituent Assembly could not overrule the U.N. resolution.

15. In the last two to three years of his life, Nehru experimented with the idea of a confederation as a solution to the Kashmir problem, which would eventually lead the way to an Indo-Pakistan confederation. For details, see S. Gopal, *Nehru*, vol. 3 (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1980), pp. 261–64, and Y. D. Gundevia, *Outside the Archives*, pp. 311–39. Abdullah conveyed this idea to President Ayub, who "vehemently denounced" the proposal, for it "would encourage the forces of disintegration, not only in Pakistan but more so in India" (in Y. D. Gundevia, *Sheikh Abdullah's Testament* [Dehra Dun and Delhi: Palit and Palit, 1974], p. 82).



By then, however, too much acrimony and distrust surrounded Sheikh Abdullah. Moreover, India had just been mauled and humiliated on the battlefield by China. Thinking India was weaker than ever before, Pakistan was in no mood to compromise. In the event, no breakthroughs were made. In 1965 Abdullah was arrested on suspicion of anti-India activities and, upon Pakistan's confident moves in Kashmir in that autumn, a second Indo-Pak war broke out.

Strategically, the war was an inconclusive draw, but politically, it was a grave miscalculation on Pakistan's part. After nearly 15 years when India had been on the defensive in the international forums, the situation changed. Apparently, Pakistan's calculation was that, with Pakistan's support, Kashmiris would rise in revolt against India, something that India's armed forces, battered in the war against China only three years back, would not be able to quell. For this reason, several hundred—by some calculations, nearly 7,000<sup>16</sup>—army men and paramilitary personnel in civilian guise were sent into the valley to generate an uprising. The uprising did not come about, but a war, nonetheless, took place as most of Pakistan's "infiltrators" in the valley were turned in by the Kashmiris. Pakistan contended that the people captured by India were not Pakistani "infiltrators" but Kashmiri freedom fighters openly in revolt against India. Independent Western observers could get no evidence of it. Once again, it seemed clear that whatever the state of their relationship with India, Kashmiris did not wish to embrace Pakistan.

A Kashmiri uprising along with an Indo-Pak war would, indeed, have put India's armed forces, only marginally stronger after the battering suffered at the Chinese hands, to a severe test. Speaking purely strategically, if the 1989 Kashmiri uprising had taken place in 1965, Pakistan's military chances in Kashmir would have been strong. India's armed forces could deal with Pakistan's military in 1965 but would have been terribly stretched if both an invasion and an uprising had taken place simultaneously. Another war erupted six years later in 1971. While the bone of contention then was East Pakistan, not Kashmir, it had serious consequences for the latter. Pakistan was bifurcated, East Pakistanis claiming that they were *Bengali* Muslims and not simply Muslims, decimating, thereby, the two-nation theory based on a priority of religion over ethnicity. Moreover, the war was a severe blow to Pakistan's armed forces. Both ideologically and militarily, it was a catastrophe for Pakistan.

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16. For an account of Pakistan's plan from a Pakistani general involved in the war, see Mohammed Musa, *My Version* (Lahore: Wajidalis Ltd., 1983). General Musa had not recommended infiltration in Kashmir, code named Operation Gibraltar. His objections were, however, overruled by Z. A. Bhutto, then foreign minister, Aziz Ahmed, defense secretary, and ultimately by President Ayub.

The war was an awful moment for Kashmiri nationalists also. They might have opposed Pakistan, but since they had a troubled relationship with India—often seeking a divorce from what they viewed as a forced marriage—they ended up getting an ally in Pakistan. For Pakistan, the best-case scenario was Kashmir's accession. Kashmir's rupture from India, whatever it meant for Pakistan, was second best but better than the worse-case scenario of Kashmir's integration with India. The 1971 defeat of Pakistan weakened Kashmiri nationalists; a plea for divorce had to be turned into a compromise. Sheikh Abdullah finally made his peace with India: "our dispute with the Government of India," he told the *Times* (London) in an interview, "is not about accession but it is about the quantum of autonomy."<sup>17</sup> This was the first public admission of a change in his position, something the Indian government was willing to deal with as it could be easily accommodated in a federal framework.

On its part, Delhi proceeded at two levels, external and internal. After its defeat, Pakistan came to a peace agreement with India. For India, it was also an opportunity to extract concessions concerning Kashmir. In the event, on July 2, 1972, an agreement signed by Indira Gandhi and Zulfikar Ali Bhutto, known as the Simla Accord, proposed: "In Jammu and Kashmir, the line of control resulting from the cease-fire of December 17, 1971, shall be respected by both sides without prejudice to the recognized position of either side. Neither side shall seek to alter it unilaterally, irrespective of mutual differences and legal interpretations. Both sides further undertake to refrain from the threat or the use of force in violation of this line."<sup>18</sup>

Internally, Delhi reopened negotiations with Sheikh Abdullah who signed an agreement with Delhi in February 1975, accepting that Kashmir was "a constituent unit of the Union of India" and that "no law made by the Legislature of the State of Jammu and Kashmir, seeking to make any change in . . . the constitution of the State of Jammu and Kashmir . . . shall take effect unless the Bill . . . receives [the president of India's] assent."<sup>19</sup> Moreover, India's Parliament would "continue to have power to make laws relating to the prevention of activities directed towards disclaiming, questioning, or disrupting the sovereignty . . . of India . . . or causing insult to the Indian National Flag, the Indian National Anthem, and the Constitution." In return, Article 370 was kept alive, which gave, as originally intended in 1950, more autonomy to J&K than to any other state in India

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17. Interview given to correspondent Peter Hezelhurst, the *Times*, March 10, 1972.

18. From the text of the Simla Accord released by both governments on July 2, 1975.

19. From the text of the Kashmir Accord, signed in November 13, 1974, and announced in Parliament on February 25, 1975. The other citations in this paragraph are also from this text.

on “welfare measures, cultural matters, social security, personal law, and procedural laws in a manner suited to the special conditions of the state.” Also, the Congress chief minister, Syed Mir Qasim, was asked to resign, and Sheikh Abdullah succeeded him. Abdullah’s compromise did not lead to any significant protest in the valley. The Jamaat-i-Islami, a party that has always argued for Kashmir’s integration with Pakistan on religious grounds, organized a small demonstration that did not go very far.

Abdullah’s leadership was later electorally legitimated. Elections in 1977 demonstrated overwhelming support for him. It is widely believed that the 1977 elections were the first fair ones in the state, as the three earlier elections had been rigged by the ruling coalition. Abdullah ruled till he died in 1982. Kashmir became quiet—and beautiful as ever; it seemed as though the problem had been solved. From the perspective of Delhi, it was a golden phase, both the rulers in Kashmir and the populace seemed content as if a marriage had been made.<sup>20</sup> Ironically, nothing symbolized this better than the Sheikh’s funeral procession. The dead body draped in an Indian flag was carried 12 km from the polo grounds in Srinagar to the burial ground near the Hazratbal mosque. Observers of the funeral heard a familiar chant: “*Sher-e-Kashmir ka kya irshad? Hindu, Muslim, Sikh Ittehad*” (What was the message of the lion of Kashmir? Friendship between Hindu, Muslim, and Sikhs”). This had been the slogan of the late 1940s, when the Sheikh’s party men and Indian forces fought the tribal invaders. “The Government of Pakistan,” noted a keen observer of Kashmir, “had no comment to offer on the death of Sheikh Abdullah.”<sup>21</sup>

*Phase 3: Abusive Secular Nationalism, Islamic Resurgence, and a Rekindling of Kashmiri Nationalism, 1983–91*

Sheikh Abdullah was succeeded by his son, Farooq Abdullah. A year later in 1983, Farooq won the state election and emerged as a leader in his own right. The National Conference under his leadership won handsomely, beating the Congress Party in the state. Indira Gandhi herself campaigned for the Congress against the National Conference. Expressing her sympathy with the Hindus of Jammu who, according to her, lived in a Muslim-majority state, she used blatantly communal messages in search of votes, a

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20. Speculatively in retrospect, Delhi missed a golden opportunity during Sheikh’s rule. With his support behind India at long last, Delhi would have, in all probability, won a plebiscite in Kashmir, but it is easy to be wise after the event. No one foresaw a return of the Kashmir problem.

21. M. J. Akbar, *The Siege Within*, p. 275.

trend that was to deepen later in Congress's electoral politics. This was also the time of Indira Gandhi's well-documented centralizing political drive as she sought to undermine several state governments ruled by non-Congress parties. These parties began to come together, and Farooq became part of the emerging "opposition conclave." Faced with opposition unity, Indira Gandhi used defections and her control over gubernatorial appointments to dislodge duly elected state governments run by opposition parties, and J&K was given a governor known to be close to her, Jagmohan. One of his first gubernatorial acts was to dismiss the Farooq government on the ground that it had lost majority support in the assembly. Governor Jagmohan did not give the chief minister a chance to test his majority in the Lower House, which was standard procedure. Farooq was simply given a list of legislators who, according to the governor, had defected from his party.

In this awkward display of power, Delhi thus violated the federal principle and had a pliant chief minister imposed on Kashmir. Farooq received considerable grass-roots support but that was not enough to undo Delhi and its allies in the state. Most observers agree that Farooq's dismissal was the beginning of a new phase of alienation in the valley. Old fears were revived. These fears could have been channeled within a federal framework if Farooq had continued to fight on that principle with the support of other opposition parties. However, in a surprising volte face and defying the basic logic of Kashmiri politics, in 1986 after Indira Gandhi's death, Farooq ended up signing a deal with the Congress under which Rajiv Gandhi's Congress and Farooq's National Conference undertook to contest the 1987 state elections together and form the government if they won. When a similar proposal had been made by Congress for the 1983 elections, Farooq had "discussed the matter with senior colleagues. . . . [It] became clear to us that if we agreed to an alliance with the Congress, the National Conference would . . . gradually be wiped out." These words would turn out to be prophetic; Farooq now admits that it was a horrible mistake.<sup>22</sup>

In the elections that followed in 1987, *Kashmiriat* was mobilized by a coalition of Islamic groups, known as the Muslim United Front (MUF). This development was as unexpected as Farooq's alliance with Congress. In Kashmir the orthodox Islamic parties had been electorally insignificant. The Jamaat-i-Islami had won a mere five seats in the 1972 state elections, only one in 1977 and none whatsoever in 1983. Of these, the 1977 and 1983 elections are widely viewed as the only two fair elections in the state. Absorbing several practices from Hinduism and Buddhism, Kashmiri Is-

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22. Farooq Abdullah, *My Dismissal* (Delhi: Vikas Publishing House, 1985), p. 21.

lam is well known for its syncretism, and support for an orthodox Islamic political platform grew.

Watching the surge in MUF support, the Conference-Congress alliance rigged the 1987 elections. With the benefit of hindsight, one can say that support for the MUF, while considerable and surprising in a land of quietistic Islam, would not have been enough to oust Abdullah. Even though he was less popular than before, Abdullah's support base was still not wiped out. In the valley where no party except the National Conference had any hold, the emergence of a party capable of getting even a plurality of vote, let alone a majority, alarmed the Conference-Congress alliance. Not only was the vote rigged, reports indicate that several electoral candidates of the MUF were beaten up. Those who were manhandled crossed the ever-porous Indo-Pak border and joined the extremist groups. The leadership of the insurgency two years later would come from some of these contestants. Later that year, riots against Farooq's government broke out; Muslim fundamentalists burned the Indian flag, and called Farooq a traitor to the Kashmiri cause. As people were killed in riots, the anti-Farooq sentiment intensified. Farooq and the Congress managed to get a huge majority, but they ruled without legitimacy. The sanctity of the electoral process and Kashmiri trust in Farooq, already declining after the agreement with Congress, collapsed after these elections. In 1953, Abdullah's imprisonment did not lead to an uprising because Kashmir did not have a substantial middle class at that point. But by 1989, a strong middle class had emerged, disaffected and large, and provided a much more fertile ground for an uprising.

This was also the time of Pakistan's military revival. Ruled by a military-led government, the Afghanistan crisis restored a frayed Pakistan-U.S. relationship. Once again the beneficiary of American arms, Pakistan's military shook off the effects of its 1971 debacle. More importantly, President Zia, the new leader, began a process of Islamization in Pakistan. As trouble in Kashmir brewed, Kashmiri nationalism once again found an ally in Pakistan. By 1987, two kinds of Kashmiri militant groups had started operating from Pakistan—Islamic groups like the Hizbul Mujahideen and the more secular Jammu and Kashmir Liberation Front (JKLF). The Hizbul Mujahideen, a fighting wing of the Jamaat-i-Islami, want Kashmir to join Pakistan on grounds of religion while the JKLF wants an independent Kashmir on grounds of ethnicity.

It is widely believed that Islamic groups have received greater support from Pakistan. The Pakistan government accepts that it provides political

support to the militants but denies supplying arms.<sup>23</sup> Many believe, including the U.S. government, that Pakistan has also provided armed support, primarily to the Islamic militants. While it is difficult for a researcher to confirm this widely held belief, it is known that thanks to the Afghanistan war, weapons of deadly potential are so easily available in Pakistan that the government does not have to supply weapons in order for the militants to get them. A veritable arms bazaar exists. Kashmiri militants have not only taken on India's paramilitary forces with Kalashnikovs and grenades, they have also engaged the army convoys in pitched battles for eight to ten hours. Weapons meant for war have reached the hands of insurgents. However, Islamic militants are even today not the most popular group in the valley. While the Hizbul Mujahideen are organizationally the strongest, the JKLF, a secular militant group, may be the more popular. Support for the JKLF is open and explicit, whereas for the Hizb it is confined to pockets and, more often than not, not openly expressed.

#### *Dimensions of a Tragedy*

India's response has been more brutal than ever before. The government's efforts to roll back the insurgency and the militants' armed resolve to "liberate" Kashmir have produced daily deaths. The Muslims constitute a majority of those killed, primarily by India's armed forces but also by armed Muslim militants silencing dissenters in their own community. The number of Hindus killed would have been greater if most of them had not migrated to camps in Jammu and Delhi. Some left after losing kith and kin to Islamic militants, others after receiving death threats, but most departed in utter panic between January and March 1990—simply to preempt death. Of the more than 150,000 Hindus, only a few are left in the valley, their numbers at best in three digits.

A typical social science exercise, burdened with rational concepts and disembodied language, cannot capture the real dimensions of the Kashmir tragedy. It is necessary to understand the nature of the pain being experienced, partly because no solution of the Kashmir situation will last if the emotional truths are ignored. People will make a compromise but not *any* compromise. The Congress-Conference alliance, whatever its rationality, foundered on the rock of mistrust and betrayal. There are two stories to tell, one from the valley, the other from the migrant camps. Both tales are marked by a deep sense of loss, bitterness, and a virtually complete lack of trust in government. The difference, however, is that Kashmiri Muslims

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23. Interview, Shafghat Kakakhel, minister-councillor, Pakistan High Commission, New Delhi, August 13, 1990.

feel mutilated and defiled by the security forces while the Hindu migrants feel uprooted and betrayed by the government, though clearly several have also been defiled by the Hizbul Mujahideen. To Kashmiri Muslims, the security forces are the ugly face of "India"; to Jammu migrants, the Hizb are the despicable face of Islam. Between the two agonies, the tolerant religious middle as well as the moderate secular center have collapsed. Sober or rational thinking lies buried under unceasing emotions and anger on both sides. Implications for a solution are such that the mutilation in the valley will not go away unless the paramilitary forces are withdrawn, and the displacement of the Hindus will not abate unless the Hizbul Mujahideen lose their strength. The JKLF, committed to an independent but secular Kashmir, is willing to take the Hindus back. However, while the JKLF may be the most popular organization, the Hizb continue to be a substantial presence and are opposed to the return of Hindus.<sup>24</sup>

### Concluding Remarks

The logic of Kashmiri politics can be culled from the discussion above. Kashmir has not been a problem when (a) its leaders have acted autonomously but without going to the point of secession, (b) the search for autonomy has not been crushed by Delhi but rather accommodated in a federal framework, and (c) Pakistan has been militarily weak. At this point, should it try, Delhi can, in principle, have control over the second element only; a stalemate, therefore, continues.

How long will the stalemate last? Two factors go against the militants' cause. First, beyond Pakistan, Kashmiri militants have little governmental support. In a dramatic change, the U.S. government currently supports India's position that a resolution of the Kashmir problem should be sought within the bilateral framework of the Simla Agreement. The second factor is domestic. Unlike Punjab, where the insurgency does not destroy economic activity in the villages where most Punjabis live, Kashmir is a one-crop, one-season economy. Tourism is the lifeblood of Kashmir's economy, and the countryside, in addition, is dependent on horticulture, the export of apples and peaches. Both activities are essentially conducted in the summer, stretching a little bit into the fall. A civil war kills tourism, and since banks and transport are essential to the export of fruits but are closed due to the insurgency, it also takes away the main source of rural incomes. Another summer or two without tourists and exports will likely bring grave economic misery.

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24. Interview given by one of the area commanders of Hizbul Mujahideen to *Observer News Channel* (Delhi), December 1990.

Since the moderate center has collapsed and the militant groups are popular, no solution is possible without the militants. When asked how long they will support the militants in view of the economic implications, Kashmiris resent the question in group settings but admit to a possible economic catastrophe in private. Militants, of course, say they will fight till the very end. It is unlikely, however, that the militants can provide a substitute for these activities. In all probability, mass support for the militants will decline in such a situation. At that point, two things can happen. Fearful of losing support, there may be a greater willingness on the part of militants to compromise. If not, an even bigger tragedy awaits Kashmir, given that India will not give up its claims for all the reasons outlined above.

Can militants agree to negotiate a solution with India? Without an understanding between India and Pakistan, it is unclear why the militants would come to the table. Pakistan may not be strong enough—militarily or diplomatically—to force a solution on India, but neither is it so weak that it would have to cease supporting the militants out of fear. So long as Pakistan's support is available, at least the pro-Pakistan militant groups can continue to operate with or without popular support within the valley. An agreement between India and Pakistan, thus, is a necessary condition for the solution of the problem. To believe, as Hindu nationalists do, that a full assertion of state authority is all that is needed to defeat the militants is to be both insensitive to Kashmiri agony and far from realistic. At the very least, militants committed to Kashmir's integration with Pakistan will not negotiate with Delhi, even if the independence-minded militants do. And if the latter agree to negotiate, they face the possibility of extinction in an internecine warfare. So long as arms continue to come to the Islamic groups and Pakistan supports them, no agreement will stick. The agreement in Punjab with the moderates collapsed due to the exclusion of the hardliners, who ultimately killed the moderate architect of the agreement.

In order for Kashmir to have peace, India and Pakistan need to compromise. The shape of compromise cannot be predicted, but its lack will only prolong the tale of sorrow—to the misfortune of Kashmiris and the sadness of outsiders looking for meeting points in these parallel acts of defiance and brutality. Midnight's children must begin to grow up; will their leaders become statesmen?