# THE STATE OF
# PAKISTAN

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*with maps by N. S. Hyslop*

REVISED EDITION

1966

FABER AND FABER

24 Russell Square

London

*First published in mcmlxii*
*by Faber and Faber Limited*
*24 Russell Square London W.C.1*
*Second (revised) edition mcmlxvi*
*Printed in Great Britain by*
*Latimer Trend & Co Ltd Plymouth*

## *Chapter 4*

# TRAGEDY IN KASHMIR

By this time the Maharaja, realizing that he was at the end of his resources, broke the standstill agreement which temporarily preserved the economic and other links between Kashmir and Pakistan and telegraphed to New Delhi for help. He was told that no assistance could be sent unless he acceded to India. Accordingly, he signed his formal Instrument of Accession on October 26th. This Lord Mountbatten accepted, with the provisio that 'it is my Government's wish that, as soon as law and order have been restored and the soil cleared of the invader, the question of the State's accession should be settled by a reference to the people'. An air-lift was hastily extemporized, largely by the use of civilian planes assembled at Delhi to evacuate Muslims to Pakistan; and Indian troops arrived in Srinagar on October 27th, just in time to halt, at the very edge of the air-strip, an advance party of the tribal invaders. No one in New Delhi took the trouble to inform Pakistan of what was happening.

It seems doubtful, in retrospect, whether India's action served anyone or anything except her own policy and the Maharaja's waning authority. There were enough Muslim leaders, Muslim troops and Muslim police in Srinagar to protect the city and its inhabitants from the tribesmen, if they had been allowed to do so: but men like Chaudhuri Ghulam Abbas and other leaders of the Muslim Conference—the local branch of the Muslim League—together with substantial bodies of Muslim troops and Muslim police, were held in confinement by the Maharaja's orders. But when he himself fled to Jammu on October 26th, there was nothing to prevent the organization of a Kashmir force to defend the city except the presence of the Indian troops, who assumed the task of keeping order. Sheikh Abdullah had been let out of prison at the end of September, probably because the Maharaja wanted to gain the support of his National Conference party. Sheikh Abdullah promptly renewed his ties with Congress leaders in New Delhi; and after the Maharaja's departure he set up in the Maharaja's name an interim administration, with India's support, pledged to religious neutralism and a non-communal policy on the Indian model.





This turn of events took Pakistan wholly by surprise. Even now, after all the years that have passed, Pakistanis cannot speak of this time without bitterness. It appears to them that India by a sudden *coup* through the instrumentality of the discredited Maharaja, and wholly against the mass-opinion of the Kashmiri people, set up an administration in Srinagar which was markedly unfriendly to Pakistan; and did this without any notification to, or consultation with, the Pakistan Government. Taken wholly by surprise, Mr. Jinnah at one moment thought of sending into Kashmir whatever troops could be collected: he was persuaded, however, by General Gracey, his British Commander-in-Chief (who realized Pakistan's unreadiness if war should break out with India) to hold his hand until Field-Marshal Sir Claude Auchinleck, as Supreme Commander with responsibilities both to the Indian and Pakistani armies, could be consulted. The Quaid-i-Azam then gave a statesmanlike lead which, if it had been followed by India, would have solved the whole problem. On November 1st he suggested that Lord Mountbatten and himself, as Governors-General, should issue an immediate cease-fire order: if it were not obeyed everywhere in Jammu and Kashmir, Pakistani and Indian troops should co-operate to enforce it. Both Governors-General should, when fighting had ceased, jointly take over the administration of Jammu and Kashmir and organize a plebiscite which would enable the Kashmiris to decide their future for themselves. Quaid-i-Azam, because of the supreme power which he exercised, could pledge himself to such an agreement. Lord Mountbatten was bound, he thought, to refer it to the Indian Cabinet. They rejected the plan out of hand: all Lord Mountbatten found himself able to do was to suggest that a plebiscite should be held under United Nations auspices. After some hesitation, Pakistan agreed, provided that Kashmir was placed under impartial administration and that all outside forces were withdrawn until the plebiscite was held. Mr. Nehru accepted in principle the idea of a plebiscite under United Nation's auspices; but made his acceptance valueless in Pakistan's eyes because he would not agree to the immediate withdrawal of Indian forces, and because he insisted that Sheikh Abdullah's administration represented the will of the Kashmiri people. It was from this moment that the Kashmir dispute actually began to run its tragic and unnecessary course, the initial stages of which were marked by quite severe fighting.

This fighting continued throughout 1948. Indian troops had originally come to Srinagar by air-lift, and from Srinagar they pushed

down to Uri, driving back the tribesmen, who, sated with loot, gradually filtered back to their own territory. But in Indian eyes, the Azad Kashmir forces were equally obnoxious as rebels against the Government of a State which had acceded to India: they and their territory became the next objective. No mere air-lift could have coped with the requirements of any operations undertaken against them. Pathankot became the Indian Army railhead; and many observers have found substance in the Pakistani complaint that the entire Indian campaign would have been impossible but for the allocation of Gurdaspur to India by the Radcliffe award. At first sight, the sides seemed very unevenly matched: the Indian troops possessed the latest military equipment; while the Azad Kashmiri forces had only rifles, and these, too, in very short supply. But the Indian lines of communication were long; the Azad Kashmir forces were fighting on their own ground—very difficult ground too—of which they knew every inch. In the type of guerrilla fighting which followed, Indian superiority in equipment was largely offset by the courage, determination, and resourcefulness of men—and women—who were defending their own homes. The women, indeed, played a great part in the campaign, not only in tending the wounded, but also in carrying up ammunition under fire to their menfolk. Among those whose reputation made them national heroines was Nasira Siddiqui, who had taken a prominent part in the former political movements aiming at protecting the Muslims of Kashmir against the Maharaja's oppression. She won a decoration for gallantry under fire, was seriously wounded, and is now the much-respected wife of Major-General M. Z. Kiani, who, when the fighting was over, rose to high civil employment in Pakistan Government service.

When I visited Azad Kashmir a few years after the fighting had ended, I found that the local military leaders were still in very buoyant mood. They explained to me some of the ruses they had employed in building up their control of the country south of the Pir Panjal range. For example, the capture of Mirpur, held by a Dogra battalion and 1,500 armed civilians, at the hands of a force which had only 103 rifles between them, was effected by sheer bluff. An enormous body of villagers was collected, and mustered at a safe distance, so that the garrison believed themselves confronted by overwhelming numbers, and surrendered. I heard, also, how the deficiencies in arms and equipment were made good by daring and well-planned raids on the Indian supply lines. The Azad Kashmiris claimed that they had





not lost permanently an inch of ground; that they had fought the Indian army to a standstill; and even that the cease-fire, when at last it was arranged between Pakistan and India, came at the very moment when the local forces were mounting a counter-stroke which would have cut off three Indian divisions. They also told me that, on several occasions, they had been restrained from pushing home their successes because of their respect for Pakistan's view that if the Indian troops lost too much 'face', the upshot might be a full-scale inter-Dominion war—which no one wanted. I must leave it to military experts to decide how far these claims are justified; what I myself can testify to is the fighting spirit of the Azad Kashmiris and their conviction of the justice of their cause, which in their eyes is the defence of the freedom of their country against Indian aggression.

As the Indian forces advanced towards Azad Kashmir territory, thousands of Kashmiris fled before them and sought refuge both in Azad Kashmir and in Pakistan. If Azad Kashmir's resistance had collapsed, the number of these refugees would have multiplied enormously beyond the power of the Pakistan Government to deal with them. It was for this reason, I was told, that some Pakistani regular troops were stationed, early in 1948, just inside Azad Kashmir territory to give the local forces confidence; they were ordered to take no part in the actual fighting against Indian units. Before very long, however, as the struggle grew more intense, Pakistani regular forces were obliged to play a more active role in defending Azad Kashmir territory. It was due to one such 'holding action' by General Hajji Iftikhar Ahmad (later Chairman of the Pakistan Industrial Development Corporation) that important components of its territory were saved for Azad Kashmir. In addition, a number of Pakistani junior officers and N.C.O.s. seem to have been allowed leave to volunteer for the Azad Kashmiri forces, so that these latter, as their equipment improved and their discipline tightened, were not infrequently mistaken for Pakistani regulars by the Indian troops opposing them. This misapprehension led the Indian Government to underestimate the strength of the armed opposition to Indian rule in Kashmir which existed independently of the Pakistan Army, and would survive the withdrawal of Pakistani regular forces from the State. When the mistake was realized, India was no longer willing to withdraw her own forces in the proportion necessary to facilitate the plebiscite.

It was a strange type of fighting in which the professional soldiers of India and Pakistan became shortly involved. A number of

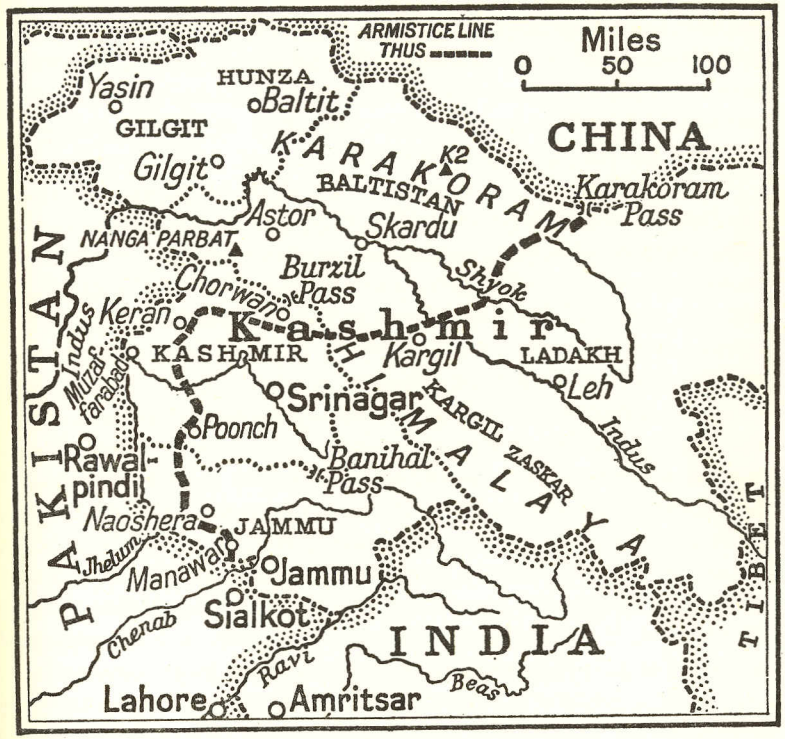
the commanding officers on each side were old comrades in arms: some had been at Sandhurst or Dehra Dun together. It was no uncommon thing, when the front line was quiet, for a visit to be paid to the officers' mess in the opposing lines. More than once, indeed, men who had served in the same regiment, but in different companies, found themselves face to face: and I was told many stories of the revival of old friendships in the midst of the strife. This type of professional *cameraderie*, although it puzzled and sometimes dismayed the Azad Kashmiris, who were fighting with the most deadly seriousness, unquestionably helped to prevent the operations in Kashmir from resulting at that time in formal hostilities between India and Pakistan.

In October 1948 the Indian Army at last succeeded in relieving beleaguered Poonch; but in the rest of Azad Kashmir territory there was stalemate, which could only be resolved if the area of operations were enlarged to a scale involving open warfare between India and Pakistan. Such a contingency seemed unthinkable to the professional soldiers on both sides: they determined to prevent it, and they succeeded, first, because neither country desired to push matters to extremes, and next because the Security Council, as we shall see, had sent a Commission to India and Pakistan with instructions to arrange a cease-fire. Thus neither India nor Pakistan would lose anything by taking the initiative. General Bucher, commanding the Indian forces, sought and obtained from Mr. Nehru permission to send a telegram on 30th December 1948 to General Gracey, his opposite number on the Pakistani side, suggesting a cease-fire. After consulting his own Government, General Gracey agreed at once; and the details were quickly arranged between the forces on both sides. The then existing positions along the borders of Azad Kashmir territory were crystallized into a *de facto* international boundary on 1st January 1949.

Before the fighting came to an end, India had set on foot, early in 1948 the lengthy, and for long inconclusive, reference of the Kashmir situation to the United Nations, which has been the source of so much controversy on either side. She reported, under Article 35 of the Charter, a situation—for which she blamed Pakistan—likely to endanger international peace. Indians have subsequently criticized their Government for not indicting Pakistan for formal aggression: but this criticism overlooks the fact that New Delhi would have been hard put to it to supply the necessary evidence. India no doubt expected Pakistan to be severely censured. But Pakistan retorted by accusing








The Cease-Fire Line in Kashmir
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India of conniving at the massacre of Muslims inside and outside Kashmir. After much argument, the Security Council appointed a five-man commission, which was instructed to arrange a cease-fire and to prepare the way for a plebiscite. It reached India and Pakistan in the summer of 1948, before the fighting had died down: and it found the statesmen of both countries angry with each other, not only because of Kashmir, but also because of disputes over refugees, over canal waters, over trade difficulties, over the division of the British Raj's assets, and over the clash of interests on the North-West Frontier connected with the 'Pakhtunistan' chimera. But the Commission suggested the possibility of a solution of the problem by stages: after the cease-fire, Pakistan should withdraw her own regular forces, and effect the withdrawal of everyone else who had come into Azad Kash-

mir from outside to fight: India should then withdraw the bulk of her own forces: local authorities under the supervision of the Commission should administer their own territories until a plebiscite could be arranged. Both sides accepted; Pakistan after some hesitation because she feared that the plebiscite might pass into the background. Her fears have proved justified.

The plebiscite did not take place. What really happened, I learned later from the senior Indian official in charge of negotiations, was that India, in agreeing to the plebiscite, had underestimated the strength of the disciplined Azad Kashmir forces who would remain in being when the armies of India and Pakistan had withdrawn. India, therefore, did not dare to pull out her troops, as the plebiscite agreement required, for fear of allowing the Azad Kashmir forces a free hand. Thus the conditions for holding the plebiscite never materialized, even when Pakistan withdrew her own troops. And, as time passed, India began to argue that there was no justification for it, as Kashmir had become part of the Indian Republic. In 1953, when Sheikh Abdullah, who had been Prime Minister since 1947, revived the idea of a plebiscite and asserted Kashmir's special status, he was overthrown by partisans of India and imprisoned without trial for eleven years. Pakistan deeply sympathized with the Kashmiris, and campaigned ceaselessly in Afro-Asian as well as in Western circles to rally opinion in the United Nations in support of their claim to self-determination. This campaign caused deep resentment in India, who employed extensive diplomatic resources to counter it, with the result that the Kashmir dispute greatly inflamed Indo-Pakistan relations, as we shall see in the next chapter. Towards the end of Mr. Nehru's life, there were signs of increasing international support for Pakistan's stand; until at length only the veto of Soviet Russia hindered the Security Council from taking action on the Kashmir question.

Mr. Nehru, with his unfailing political flair, released Sheikh Abdullah, liberalized the Kashmir administration under his control, and dismissed Bakhshi Ghulam Mohammad, the 'tough' Prime Minister. But before he could carry through this milder policy, Mr. Nehru died; and his successor, Mr. Shastri, lacking Mr. Nehru's prodigious personal ascendancy, found any change in the Indian attitude impracticable in face of right-wing Hindu pressure. Sheikh Abdullah, in the course of a tour abroad, so greatly exacerbated Indian feelings by certain public statements that when he returned, he was kept under house arrest in South India.





Tension between Pakistan and India increased, and was augmented by charges and counter-charges of frontier violations in East Pakistan as well as across the cease-fire line in Kashmir. There were also serious clashes in the Rann of Kutch—of which more later. The Indian Government, under constant pressure from chauvinist opinion, decided to abolish Kashmir's special status and to assimilate it completely to other Indian States.

This proved the last straw for Azad Kashmir, and perhaps for Pakistan also. In the summer and autumn of 1965, large numbers of armed infiltrators—as reported by United Nations observers—crossed into Indian-held territory. India accused Pakistan of instigating the incursions, warning her that if open fighting broke out, it would not be confined to Kashmir but would take place in localities of India's own choosing. Pakistan, asserting that there was a Kashmir revolt against Indian rule, gave the infiltrators material as well as moral support. As in 1947, 'undeclared war' broke out: India, besides 'mopping up' the infiltrators, crossed the cease-fire line to seize strategic points, and, in addition, struck at West Pakistan's vulnerable flank in the Sialkot and Lahore areas. The Kashmir dispute thereupon ceased to be a local issue, and became, as we shall see in the next chapter, a threat to world peace, compelling the Security Council to action.

What are the different parts of Kashmir really like? Perhaps some personal impressions may be of interest.

It is the Kashmiri people for whom I have always felt most sorry, divided as they are by the cease-fire line, which, patrolled by United Nations observers, cuts village from village and sometimes house from house. Not all the former State of Jammu and Kashmir is unhappy. The Gilgitis and Baltis have made their own decision to cut their ties with Srinagar, and, as I have seen, they are certainly not regretting it. But in Jammu and in the Valley of Kashmir, where Indian-supported administrations exercise authority, I found the position less cheering. They were allowed to hold elections—in defiance of an undertaking given in the Security Council—and to secure the return of an Assembly composed of their own supporters. I found it very difficult to discover what ordinary men in the town and the villages were thinking and feeling—they would not talk freely. There were too many pressures upon them: the large and ubiquitous Indian garrison, the State Police, and a kind of Youth Vigilance Corps. At the same time it was easy to see that a great deal is being done for them on the material side: money is being well