

INSTITUTE OF CURRENT WORLD AFFAIRS

WDF-10  
India and Kashmir

c/o American Embassy  
New Delhi, India  
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522 Fifth Avenue  
New York 36, New York

Dear Mr. Rogers:

When I was in Pakistan last year, I saw maps of the country which showed dotted lines around the "State of Jammu and Kashmir" and the words, underneath in parentheses, "Disputed Territory." Since I have been in India, I have found only maps with a solid line around Kashmir. Here there is no such uncertainty or modesty. Kashmir is part of India and everybody knows it.

Having crossed the border, I have also learned that the areas I had known as "Azad (Free) Kashmir" and "Indian-occupied Kashmir," respectively, are known in India as "the so-called 'Azad' Kashmir" and simply "Kashmir." In all, with rival armies stationed on opposite sides of a cease-fire line, India and Pakistan in a more-or-less constant state of irritation over Kashmir, and the United Nations still engaged in the Kashmir question after nine years, I am inclined to agree with that designation "Disputed Territory."

I recently spent two weeks in Indian Kashmir. It was Spring, and after gazing at the snow-capped mountains that ring the valley, riding along poplar-lined roads past yellow fields of mustard, and strolling through an orchard of pink-blossoming almond trees, I thought that whoever called Kashmir "a jewel on the snowy bosom of Central Asia"---be he poet, press agent or politician---he wasn't too far off.

However charming the natural beauty of Kashmir (the women are beautiful too), my chief interest in Kashmir is politics. I have tried to write down a succinct statement of the Indian point of view and of the impressions of my visit. But I have produced sentences so insipid or so over-simplified that I cannot include them here. Let me scatter information and impressions along the way, and state some conclusions at the end of this letter, which, I'm afraid, like the Kashmir dispute, goes on at some length.

Because I presented a brief background sketch of the Kashmir problem in my letter on the Pakistani and Azad Kashmiri view (WDF-4), I will backtrack only to pick up the Indian argument. But I should reiterate one or two points. First, for a millennium Hindus and Muslims in India lived in various degrees of communal antipathy and harmony, dissimilarity and assimilation. But the antipathies and dissimilarities were accentuated as the Independence of 1947 drew near, and Independence came only with the Partition of India along communal lines. Second, the Kashmir problem is a child of Partition, and other Partition problems---the communal strife that brought widespread murder and arson and mass migration of

refugees, the hostility between the two governments, the disputes over possessions left behind by refugees, the quarrels over economic blockades, currency values, canal waters and the accession of two other princely states---all surrounded the Kashmir issue and further irritated it.

There are many arguments presented by India on the Kashmir issue. I have tried to state the view that is informed and moderate:

"On the withdrawal of British rule from India, the 500-odd princely states, as distinguished from the British provinces, resumed their independence from British paramountcy. They were then free to remain independent or, accepting the advice of the Viceroy Mountbatten, accede to either of the two new Dominions. The Maharajah of Kashmir was one of only three rulers who by Aug. 15, 1947, the day British rule ended, had not acceded one way or the other.

"While the Maharajah remained undecided, his State was invaded by tribesmen from Pakistan, who, while claiming a campaign of "liberation" of their "oppressed Muslim brothers," looted and pillaged, and included as their victims Muslims as well as non-Muslims. Under the pressure of the invasion, the Maharajah appealed to India for aid. We, refusing to send our troops into an independent State, replied that aid could be granted only after Kashmir had acceded to India. The accession was duly offered and accepted, and Indian troops were dispatched to Kashmir, where they repelled the invaders.

"Our primary motive in aiding Kashmir was to defend the people from aggression and to ensure them the right of self-determination. Because of this, a unilateral proviso accompanied the acceptance of the accession, namely, that 'as soon as law and order have been restored in Kashmir and its soil cleared of the invader, the question of the State's accession should be settled by a reference to the people.'

"The complicity of Pakistan in aiding the invaders was first obscured, but was soon clear. Pakistan provided a base of operations, military equipment and transit to the invaders, and permitted Pakistan nationals to join in the fighting. When discussions with Pakistan for a settlement of the situation were blocked by extravagant Pakistani demands for a role in Kashmir equal to India's, we took the issue to the UN, complaining that Pakistan's complicity in the invasion amounted to aggression.

"Swayed by irrelevant Pakistani counter-charges and enmeshed in power politics, the UN disregarded our complaint and the realities of the situation and proceeded to regard Pakistan not as an aggressor but as an equal party to the 'dispute.' Consequently Pakistan, though having no moral or legal right to do so, participated in the decisions regarding arrangements for a plebiscite and the prerequisite disposal of military forces in Kashmir. Although Kashmir had legally acceded to us and we are bound to provide for its defense and guarantee its lawful administration, there were attempts to legitimize the Pakistan-puppet 'Azad' Kashmir Government and its forces and thus gain for Pakistan a share in the organization and conduct of the plebiscite and control over a large part of Kashmir during the holding of it.

"Be that as it may, under the two key agreements which India is party to (Aug. 13, 1948, and Jan. 5, 1949), clearly the withdrawal of Pakistani troops, the large-scale disarming of the 'Azad' Kashmir forces, and the restoration of unified administration are prerequisites to the holding of

a plebiscite. Our commitment on a plebiscite depends on fulfilment of the prerequisites. They have not been fulfilled, and yet we are accused of failing to abide by our commitment.

"The proposal made in the UN in February that our troops be removed in toto from our own territory and that foreign troops under the UN banner be introduced presents a contradiction to our independence and an infringement upon our sovereignty. The proposal placed India, the original plaintiff, in the position of the defendant. No such UN or other force can ever be permitted on our soil.

"There are other factors to consider. Long years have passed since those agreements were reached. Conditions have changed. Can parties which made certain agreements under certain circumstances be held accountable for those agreements after the original circumstances have been drastically altered? The main point here is that Pakistan has joined military alliances and received large-scale US military aid. This has led Pakistan's allies to disregard the true issues of the case, emboldened Pakistan to greater truculence, made the question of demilitarization of Kashmir largely irrelevant, and even now threatens the very security of India.

"Furthermore there are practical hazards in holding a plebiscite: it would stir up a situation which has settled, call up communal tensions not only in Kashmir but throughout India, where the sense of security of the Muslim minority would be threatened. Again, a plebiscite might suspend, if not reverse, the process of economic, political and social development which has come to Kashmir since the fighting stopped.

"In short, the two main facts about the Kashmir question are that Pakistan has committed aggression and that Kashmir has acceded to India. Until these facts are recognised, a satisfactory settlement of the whole Kashmir question will be difficult."

This statement, I think, covers the main points in the Indian argument. There is, however, another channel of thought less well defined that consciously or unconsciously is part of the Indian viewpoint on Kashmir. It has to do with the political history of Kashmir as viewed in the light of the expectations and wishes of the Congress in India. It goes back to the 1930's:

Concurrent with the Congress' nationalist movement in the British provinces was an affiliated nationalist movement in some of the princely states. In Kashmir, the key figure was Sheikh Mohammad Abdullah, who helped found the Muslim Conference, in opposition to the Hindu Maharajah, in 1931. By 1938, the organization turned intercommunal, became the National Conference, grew closer to the Congress, more distant from the rival Muslim League, and more clamorous in its opposition to the Maharajah. In 1946, Abdullah was sentenced to jail for nine years for sedition.

As Aug. 15, 1947, came and went, the Maharajah continued to postpone a decision on accession, while Abdullah, released from jail, spoke with impunity in favor of "freedom before accession" and even hinted that no accession at all, that a Kashmir independent of both India and Pakistan, would be ideal. But when the tribesmen invaded Kashmir, Abdullah too saw the state in "dire peril." He advocated provisional accession to India and welcomed the military aid it brought. In a step that brought an expression of "satisfaction" from the Indian Government, the Maharajah appointed Abdullah "Head

of the Emergency Administration." Abdullah's government co-existed with the Maharajah's for a while until the latter was dissolved and the Maharajah left the scene.

Why did India unilaterally offer a "reference to the people" or "referendum" or "plebiscite"---the terms were used interchangeably---as a proviso of accession? We have Nehru's explanation in a broadcast on Nov. 2, 1947, a week after accession took place:

"We are anxious not to finalize anything in a moment of crisis without the fullest opportunity to be given to the people of Kashmir to have their say. It was (sic) ultimately for them to decide. And here let me make clear that it has been our policy all along that where there is a dispute about accession of a state to either Dominion, the accession must be made by the people of that state. It was in accordance with this policy that we have added a proviso to the instrument of accession of Kashmir...We have declared that the fate of Kashmir is ultimately to be decided by the people. That pledge we have given, and the Maharajah has supported it, not only to the people of Kashmir but to the world. We will not and cannot back out of it. We are prepared when peace and law and order have been established to have a referendum held under international auspices like the United Nations. We want it to be a fair and just reference to the people and we shall accept their verdict. I can imagine no fairer and more just offer."

This is high-principled statesmanship indeed. And it is no detraction to say that India might well have expected to win a plebiscite at the time. The reasoning: Kashmiris, appalled by the outrages of the invaders and grateful to India for aid, and united under the intercommunal, pro-India (or at the minimum, anti-Pakistan) leadership of Abdullah, would vote for India. One can see a measure of hope in India too: The National Conference was regarded as the "representative political organization" of Kashmiris, having been an affiliate of the Congress since 1941. The ideals of the National Conference as stated in its "New Kashmir" manifesto of 1944 were compatible with the ideals of the Congress, and compatible-plus with those of the Congress' left wing. "New Kashmir" would be a secular state with a democratic constitution and a program of socialistic economic development.

But the plebiscite was delayed. By 1950, indecision at the UN had, in the words of a National Conference resolution, produced "doubt and frustration" among Kashmiris as to the future of their state. In order to end the consequent "agony and uncertainty," the National Conference government then sponsored a general election to form an assembly which would frame a constitution, settle the future of the royal dynasty, revise the land-owning system and---over the protest of Pakistan and the UN---decide the matter of accession. The election was duly sponsored, and the assembly went to work.

In July 1952 Abdullah and Nehru agreed to certain interim provisions that brought Kashmir more firmly into the constitutional and juridical orbit of India, while ensuring a degree of semi-autonomy for Kashmir. India's concessions---Kashmir was guaranteed special state-citizenship rights, a state flag, a "Head of the State" (the son of the Maharajah), and exemption from some provisions of the Indian Constitution---were apparently made to satisfy the lingering nationalistic demands of the National Conference and to assuage Muslim-predominant Kashmir that it would not be swallowed whole by avowedly secular but Hindu-predominant India.

Now extremist Hindus in India began clamoring in resentment against Kashmir as a "republic within a republic," and extremist Hindus in Jammu

bearing the same complaint---and irked in addition by alleged discrimination against Jammu in state reform measures---began anti-Abdullah agitation. Abdullah, wondering publicly whether communalism still had a foothold in India, hinted once again that he favored an independent Kashmir, implying repudiation of accession.

Suddenly, in August, 1953, Abdullah was overturned in a coup d'etat that thrust Bakhshi Ghulam Mohammed, his deputy, into the Prime Ministership. Abdullah was jailed with several of his colleagues, and is still in preventive detention after three and a half years "in the interests of the security of the state." The coup touched off a series of scattered, violent protests in Kashmir in which an estimated 12-to-46 persons were killed by police firing. India's interest in the results of the coup were considerable--- a vacillating Abdullah was replaced by a zealously pro-Indian Bakhshi---and there are indications that Nehru may not have been fully informed when, in commenting on the affair, he said that "the Government of India does not interfere with internal matters in Kashmir and treats that state as autonomous."

At any event, under the Bakhshi government the bonds that linked India and Kashmir soon grew tighter. Under a Presidential Order of May 1954 the Indian Constitution became more fully applied to Kashmir, and economic aid came in larger quantities. The process of integration was a mutually agreed, mutually satisfactory matter between the two governments. When it came to the questions of accession and plebiscite, however, Bakhshi appeared to be the more assured, Nehru the more reluctant.

When in early 1954 Bakhshi said that the Kashmir assembly would get along with its task of ratifying the state's accession to India, Nehru commented that "There has been at no time any question of our repudiating the decisions of the (Kashmir) Constituent Assembly and indeed we have no right to do so." At the same time he recalled the plebiscite agreement and regretted the delay in holding it. When a year later Bakhshi spoke of the Assembly confirming the accession, Nehru commented that a thing of that sort "was not decided unilaterally."

In mid-1955 Pandit Pant, the Indian Home Minister, stated that because of an "important series of facts"---development achievements in Kashmir, Pakistan's military alliance with the US, the decision of the Constituent Assembly "elected on the basis of adult franchise," et cetera ---he personally had come "to feel the tide cannot be turned now," implying that it was too late to talk of plebiscite. In answer to a protest from Pakistan, Nehru declared that India would stand by her declarations and commitments on Kashmir, "although it was necessary to make a fresh approach rather than merely repeat past declarations."

In March 1956 Nehru seemed to have said much the same thing Pandit Pant was saying eight months earlier. Nehru told the Lok Sabha: "...We want to avoid any step being taken which will disturb or upset things which have settled down and which again lead to that conflict with Pakistan which we have wanted to avoid. While we are desirous of settling the Kashmir problem with Pakistan, there will be no settlement if the manner of settlement itself leads to a conflict with Pakistan. As things settle down, any step which might have been logical some years back becomes more and more difficult, it means the uprooting of things that have been fixed legally, constitutionally and practically."

Meanwhile, the Kashmir assembly continued its work. Last November

it completed the Constitution, which in its preamble fixes the state as an "integral part" of India. Last Jan. 26, the Constitution became operative. Unlike Pakistan and the Security Council, India saw no change in the status quo. Nehru's comment was that the Kashmir assembly had finished its work and would now dissolve itself and disappear. There was nothing more for it to do. "The position remains as it is."

On March 1 in Meerut, Nehru told an election meeting, "I have no doubt that the people of Kashmir have given their real opinion from their very heart about their future." He referred to the plebiscite, saying (to quote the Times of India), "...it had already been done 'in our own way.' Elections had been held in Kashmir a few years ago. Elections would again be held in March there. But in the so-called 'Azad' Kashmir, there had been no elections. Even in the whole of Pakistan there had been no elections worth the name..."

What does this long and tangled process mean? Is India's interest in Kashmir the noble one of providing Kashmiris with protection from Pakistan aggression and ensuring them the right of self-determination? Or is India simply a sly and accomplished participant in the old game of power politics?

I would suggest another motive, which involves the ideals of those political leaders---Nehru above all---who struggled long for independence for their country and work today, against great obstacles, to make India, as a state and as a people, united, prosperous and strong. This motive takes the form of something between a wish and a plan. It is that Kashmir, a formerly monarchic state with an impoverished, predominantly Muslim population, should, although in religious minority, choose of its own free will to cast its lot with secular, democratic, socialist India. Indian leadership, I think, has this wishful picture of Kashmir, and it plans and works to bring it to reality. (There is a negative incentive here too, it seems, namely the desire to repudiate the Pakistani concept of the religious state, the so-called "two-nation" theory that led to the Partition of India.)

Have the people of Kashmir chosen India? There is Nehru's opinion that they have, that "election" equals "plebiscite," that the future of Kashmir has been referred to "the will of the people." Is this true?

Some indication may come from a look at the Kashmir elections.

In the election of 1951, Abdullah's National Conference won 73 of the 75 seats in the assembly in uncontested returns, i.e., there were no other candidates. In the two constituencies where there was opposition and hence balloting, the National Conference candidates defeated two "independents." In the words of Lord Birdwood (in his Two Nations and Kashmir, London: Robert Hale Ltd., 1956), "the elections would have been more convincing if the opposition could have claimed at least to have been allowed to exist... In the valley the evidence was that no opposition parties were allowed to organise an election campaign." In Jammu, the Praja Parishad, a Hindu party, having seen 13 of its 25 candidates rejected by election officials, withdrew and boycotted the election. By Indian standards, it was hardly an election worth the name.

The outcome of the election has to be interpreted in the context of

the National Conference claim that it spoke for the people of Kashmir, Abdullah's considerable personal popularity, his high-handed methods of repressing opposition, and what is generally regarded as the relatively low level of active political awareness and participation of the populace. Unfortunately, all of these factors are difficult to measure. At any rate, Abdullah's government now continued, now sanctioned by a general election, of sorts.

In the election of 1957, there were more contests, but still no contest. National Conference candidates won 40 of the 75 assembly seats in uncontested returns, so that again the election was over before it began. Of the 27 contests held so far, 20 have been won by the National Conference.

In Jammu, five seats went to the National Conference uncontested, there were 20 contests, and five contests will be decided later. The main battle was between the Praja Parishad, bolstered by the rightist Jana Sangh of India, and the National Conference, given strong last-minute support by the Congress. In the balloting on March 25 the National Conference won 13 seats, the Parishad five, a scheduled castes' party one, and a mix-up in one constituency has necessitated re-polling.

The turn-out of voters was large. According to the Election Commission and the Press Information Bureau, there are 720,000 eligible voters in Jammu Province, of whom 470,452, or 65%, live in constituencies where there were contests. Disregarding the voters in that mixed-up constituency, who went to the polls but whose votes were not counted, the number of possible voters on election day was 444,982. Of the "possibles," approximately 304,290 cast ballots, for a participation of 68%, about 13% higher than the all-India figure. Out of the total eligible electorate of 720,000, those who both could and did vote numbered 304,290, so that the over-all participation was 42%. This percentage may vary in its final form, depending on the remaining contests: it will go up if there is heavy balloting, or it will go down if the Praja Socialist Party (PSP), the opposition, makes good its threat to withdraw from the election there unless "harassment and obstruction" of its election meetings ceases.

In the valley of Kashmir, meanwhile, the picture was quite different. The National Conference filed a full slate of candidates for the 43 seats up for election. Two opposition parties that have splintered off the National Conference---the Plebiscite Front and the Political Conference---boycotted the "farce" elections on the grounds that their key leaders are in preventive detention, and that if they were to contest the elections they would be giving their approval to the basic Constitutional premise that Kashmir is part of India. The PSP nominated 12 candidates but had nine disqualified for what it claimed were "minor technical omissions" (in seven of the cases) in the nomination papers. But the PSP had three candidates left and there were five "independents," so that eight seats were contested and 35 were won, uncontested, by the National Conference.

In the balloting on March 30, the National Conference won seven of the contests, and an "independent" won the remaining one.

The statistics show that there are 1.1 million eligible voters in Kashmir. Because there were only eight contests, however, there were



only 180,124 possible voters, or 16% of the total eligible. Of the possibles, 75,150 cast ballots, for a turn-out of 41.6%. But out of the total eligible electorate of 1.1 million, the 75,150 who both could and did vote brought the over-all participation to only 6.8%. Two seats in Ladakh district will be settled later.

An interpretation of the election results should take into account the National Conference claim to speak for the non-voting public, Bakshi's personal popularity, the thwarting of opposition nominees, the continued imprisonment of key political figures, the announced "boycott" by the two parties, the low-but-rising level of popular political participation, the novelty of balloting, and the rain on election day in the valley.

I spent that rainy election day morning riding around to polling stations with a government press officer, a reporter from the Press Trust of India, and A.M. Rosenthal, the New Delhi correspondent of The New York Times. In Srinagar we drove through narrow streets clogged with men wrapped in soggy brown blankets, women in soiled white burqas and squads of khaki-clad policemen trying to direct the flow of traffic. We visited polling stations in a dispensary, a school and other public buildings. In the afternoon I went out again alone. In all, I visited only ten of the 185 stations in the valley and only two of the eight constituencies.

The election law and election-day methods followed the Indian pattern, although the election was sponsored by a separate State Election Commission. Having spent some time observing elections in India, it is my opinion that in terms of preparation, calibre of election officials, regard for proper election procedure, and order and efficiency in processing voters, conditions in the polling stations I visited were sub-par.

In one polling station in Srinagar, I saw the polling agent of a National Conference candidate (whose role was to observe the procedure and object to malpractices) holler frantically at one voter about to enter the booth. The agent's right hand pumped up and down rapidly, in the motion of a voter putting a ballot in the box. I did not understand what he shouted, but assuming it was "Whatever you do, don't vote for my candidate!" his action was still illegal. The presiding officer stood near by.

In one village, Pampora, National Conference posters and election symbols (the pair of yoked bullocks, like the Congress) were fastened to the front of a post office that served as the polling station, and in front of the building, ten yards from the door, was posted the National Conference flag (which resembles the state flag). Men and women voters were being lined up and ushered around in front of the building by men wearing National Conference badges. These things were patently illegal.

As Rosenthal and I returned to the hotel and walked through the lobby I thought of the elections in India. "Well," I said, "there are elections, and then there are elections." I don't know what he was thinking about, but he replied, "Yeah. And this was the latter."

As for the election issues, the National Conference staunchly stood by accession to India, denounced "imperialist intervention" in Kashmiri affairs (the UN proceedings) and pointed out the economic benefits accruing from National Conference policies.

In no sense was the issue of accession a major factor or a clear-cut



issue in the election. In Jammu, there is little argument about accession. Most people there are thought to take it as inviolable. In Kashmir, I was told by a National Conference official that "The voters take accession for granted." That is a presumption. The requirement is evidence, and in the light of the evidence---regarding public participation, election procedure and the election issues---I personally think that it is, at the very least, premature to say with assurance that "the people of Kashmir have given their real opinion from their very heart about their future."

My new acquaintances in the Kashmir government were a friendly, pleasant lot, slightly defensive and fairly self-assured. There was no question that "Pakistani aggression," Kashmir's "fully completed accession" to India and "Western hostility" toward India in the UN were articles of faith with them, and although conversation touched on these topics, good manners kept us from dwelling on them.

One of the things they did talk about was "Azad" Kashmir. I had been there. Wasn't it true that the government was a Pakistan puppet that ruthlessly suppressed the opposition and failed to offer the people the right of democratic election? Wasn't it true that there were armed to the teeth over there and preparing the people for "holy" war? Wasn't it true that there was starvation and high prices? Didn't they have any economic planning?

All this was by way of contrast to conditions in Indian Kashmir. In condensed form, the list of accomplishments since accession to India---or better, "since August 1953," when the Bakhshi regime came to power---runs like this:

One Five Year Plan completed and a start on the Second, radical land reforms that have abolished large landed estates and provided land to the tiller, completion of power and irrigation schemes, building of roads and bridges and the 7000-foot-high Banihal Tunnel linking the valley to India with an all-year-round road, increase in health and medical services, a fast start on a program of community development that includes emphasis on the social and political as well as economic growth of villages, the establishment of state business enterprises which provide revenue to the government and employment to workers, and an increase in the tourist trade to a level of twice what it was in the old days.

I visited a village in a community development "block," Amreheer, and from a look at the recent accomplishments---the building of a community center, the election of a newly invigorated panchayat ("council of five"), the founding of an elementary school, the planting of tree seedlings as a village enterprise, the gift of medical supplies, a radio and the first clock ever to come to the villagers---I am convinced that great forward strides are being taken.

I was interested too in how all this is being paid for, so I enquired (later, in Jammu) of the Cabinet Secretary for Finance and Planning. He was a mild sort of man. Most of the development projects, he said, came under the Five Year Plans of all India. Kashmir's share in the First Plan came to Rs 127 million (or \$26.67 million at the official exchange rate of \$.21 to the rupee). Of this, Rs 97 million (\$20.37 million) came from the Indian Government as part of the Center's grants-to-states policy, and the rest came from the state. The Second Plan will

jump to Rs 339 million (\$71.19 million). This is a lot of money. As I figured later, it is Rs102.92 for each person in Kashmir, as against the all-India per capita figure of Rs59.40. It is also a considerable amount for a state whose own annual revenue budget for 1956-57 runs to about Rs 70 million (\$14.7 million). Although most of this Rs 70 million comes from state forest and land revenues and state industrial, real estate and power enterprises, slightly more than Rs 25 million of it comes from an Indian grant in compensation for the state's loss of customs revenues now collected by the Center. This is generous compensation.

Furthermore, the secretary told me, all loans to the state from the Center have indebted the state in the past three years by Rs 13 million in interest charges alone, against which the state budget calls for an annual repayment of about Rs 3 million. He said he didn't have the figures on the total outstanding loans from the Center---he had only been there a year.

"I am really not interested in this problem," he continued. "The borrower and lender should not take this seriously. The Center has no resources of its own, anyway." Perhaps the loans will be converted into grants or partial grants or interterminal loans? I suggested. Well, he replied, "the principle is that of all-India development from all-India resources."

My new acquaintances in the Kashmir government were willing---even solicitous---that I should see "the opposition," the Plebiscite Front and the Political Conference. The opposition gave them a mild pain: they were anachronistic, on the wrong side of the fence, they were the obstructionists, the grouseurs. But they were no real worry. "They have no appeal," I was told.

I might also add that they have no access to the press, that they are subjected to the pro-Nationalist Conference hooliganism that inhibits not only "the opposition" but also the friendly opposition and the activities of occasional foreigners. "The opposition" is also restrained by its awareness of the state preventive detention law, under which 44 persons are now jailed, 22 of them, the government counts, for political reasons.

But word gets around in Srinagar, and "the opposition" came to me.

Three men from the Plebiscite Front came calling one morning in the hotel. They introduced themselves as the fourth acting president, the secretary, and the general secretary. Fourth president? I asked. Yes, the founder and president, a colleague of Abdullah's, was in detention, as were two of his successors.

The man in charge, however, was the general secretary, a well-tailored, handsome lawyer and ex-MLA. How did I like Kashmir? he began. Beautiful, I replied, very peaceful.

"It is the peace of a graveyard," he said quickly and earnestly. "There is too much of terrorism, too much of the police and the Indian army, too little of civil liberties." He ran through a catalogue of the various denominations of police. "More than 400 Plebiscite Front workers have been detained in police station-houses or arrested or beaten. None of this goes on the police record. When we complain they say 'Show us, where is it on the record?' Not a week ago we had political meetings broken up by the National Conference gang. My jeep was smashed---it's still there, you can go see for yourself! There are no civil liberties here!"

He complained about "all this Indian propaganda about economic development to show how 'happy and content' we are in Kashmir. But there are only showy buildings and roads and bridges and no investment for the people, while we are falling so much in debt to India we will never get out. Of course, that's what they want."

We talked of the plebiscite and he laid out the Plebiscite Front case: "India has made it clear that they came here to save us from the tribal raiders. We know. We resisted the invasion with Indian help. But now look what has happened! India stays and stays and gives us no self-determination."

I tried to get him to reveal to what extent his party is communal, pro-Pakistan or pro-independent Kashmir. He didn't nibble. "We do not say, with Pakistan, that the Muslims of Kashmir are especially attached to Pakistan because they are Muslims too. We only care for what attitude a country adopts on our right of self-determination. We are not pro-Pakistan, like the Political Conference. We are pro-plebiscite."

Why is no plebiscite held? I asked. "India is afraid it will lose." Why would India lose? I asked. "I didn't say it would," he countered. Would it? I insisted. "How can I know?" he answered. "We only say 'plebiscite.'" If a plebiscite is held, I asked, which side, India or Pakistan, would your party campaign for? "There would be many factors to be considered...We would have to see."

All right then, what does the Plebiscite Front want now? I asked. "Let Pakistan and Indian forces be withdrawn. Let there be a pledge of no aggression. If India worries about 'being responsible for protecting Kashmir,' let them get a UN guarantee. Then let there be a plebiscite administrator and a free and impartial plebiscite. Any more delay is dangerous."

What if the UN cannot do these things? I asked. The fourth acting president broke his silence in a burst that was too loud for the room: "We will go on suffering. Revolts can arise. Our power will not rest!" They told me of their numbers---"580,000 members in the valley"---and left me with a bulging envelope---essays and pamphlets rebutting Government pamphlets, condemning the detention of their political colleagues, pleading against the "tyranny, torture and harassment" of the Bakhshi regime, bemoaning the "real economic depression" in Kashmir, and attacking the validity of the elections.

The delegation from the Political Conference came a couple of days later. They did not look quite so substantial as the Plebiscite Front people. They were four men, a passionate but pleasant young lawyer, a student, a trade union leader and a man introduced as, again, the "fourth acting president." Which jail is the president in? I enquired. "Srinagar city jail" was the matter-of-fact reply.

The visitors covered many of the points raised by the Plebiscite Front, with whom they said they agreed "so far as they say 'plebiscite.'" They complained of the "Gestapo methods" of the police---"they are the lifeblood of the Bakhshi government"---and derided development projects---"All the India money has brought is jeep-cars, thanidars and deevans" (jeeps, sub-inspectors of police and walls).

What was their program? The lawyer, the "chairman of the defense council," read the manifesto. "Immediate restoration of civil liberties,

release of all political prisoners, end of gangster rule in the state, withdrawal of all Indian and Pakistani armed forces from the state, a free and impartial plebiscite with a specifically prescribed period, under the direction, control and supervision of the United Nations." He added, "The UN Emergency Force we have always wanted, although we didn't have the name!"

When there is a plebiscite, he continued, the Political Conference "will lead the people to accede to Pakistan 'in conformity'"---he read some more---"with the principles of geographical contiguity, economic interdependence, social ties, cultural relationship, natural links of communication and the highly compulsive force of innate or psychological pull."

The young lawyer also avoided explanations that had to do with communalism, and he pointed out that his organization had "many Hindus" among its "180,000" members. He portrayed the "isolation" of Kashmir from India and took delight in the fact that the airplane service from Delhi had been cut off for the previous few days because of bad weather and that the road over the mountains to Jammu had been blocked by landslides. To demonstrate the "natural outlets with Pakistan" he cited facts and figures that showed it cost 150 times as much to lorry timber over the mountains to India as it did in the old days to float it down the Jhelum to Pakistan.

He talked at great length, so I requested shorter answers. What of Bakhshi? I asked. He wriggled in the chair, trying to find a phrase. "Before, he was nothing! But now, with his paid clique---" What of Sheikh Abdullah? "We don't know...It depends of what he says if he is released..." What of Nehru? He wriggled again. "That man adopts and discards and excuses as the opportunity arises and the emergency dictates."

What did he think would come of the Kashmir question in the UN? "Mr. Jarring will probably do nothing new," he began, "and the Russian veto is there...If the General Assembly could pass a two-thirds majority---Mr. Nehru will not be able to resist the moral force of the General Assembly." He spoke of "UN sanctions" having "forced" the British, French and Israelis out of Egypt. I suggested an alternative explanation. He pondered, then said quietly, "Then comes the question of the trial of arms." The conversation ended.

I paid a visit to the headquarters of the Praja Socialist Party and found a sickly, dreamy man who heads the party in Kashmir. I sat in those dark, cold quarters and listened as he talked wearily of how election officials had rejected nine of his party's 12 candidates. Nonetheless, he said, "It is a healthy sign that they allow some people to come forward."

He regretted the lack of "real interest" in the campaign. "It is the fault of the Plebiscite Front and the Political Conference to boycott the elections. We? We are only two years old here, we are weak."

He talked of accession. "No, it is not being solved, although the election is there...They don't dare hold it...We? We say that India has good claims because India was invited here by us. Somehow or other, some defects arose..." He began to wonder to himself, and then returned to me. "There is some weight in staying with India."

The plebiscite, he said, is a "good principle, but how to get it? The people are not so politically conscious. They must be taught all the factors involved." He talked mistily about a "three or four year

program," led by the PSP, which would explain the issues to the Kashmiri peasants. "But the Indian view is that plebiscite is not practical now, it seems...I don't think they will leave Kashmir." He half-smiled sadly. "Some people are mad for India, some people are mad for Pakistan, nobody is mad for Kashmir."

It was the president of the state PSP, an ex-journalist, who briefed me on a major political concern in Kashmir, the presence of Communists or near-Communists in the National Conference government. This was no sensational disclosure, for among informed Indians and Westerners in India this is generally taken for granted.

The National Conference has been a radical organization all along, and considering conditions in Kashmir under the Maharajah, it's easy to be sympathetic to the party's programs of social, economic and political reform. But in the PSP view, the National Conference today is "a united front of socialists and Communists," and the gripe is that "the Communists don't come out and show their real shape. The Congress should mind this," the president scolded, "but all they care about is that Bakhshi Sahib supports accession. The question of accession has turned their heads from what the National Conference is now."

He repeated a story I had heard several times in Srinagar, that the "independent" candidate who opposed the fellow-travelling National Conference MLA in the city was quietly being supported by Bakhshi. The "independent" won by a narrow margin.

The names of the "Communists" in the cabinet are mentioned freely as being thus inclined. One of them, G.M. Sadiq, Minister of Education and Health, all but shouted himself hoarse in late 1953 charging the US and Britain with "imperialist intervention" in allegedly trying to lure Abdullah into creating an independent Kashmir, which would then become a Western base in the Cold War. Sadiq is also credited with having organized demonstrations in protest of "American germ warfare" in Korea.

In terms of economic policy, one of the "triumphs" of New Kashmir has been the confiscation, without compensation, of farm land from big landowners. But I should not imply that this policy is a result of Communist influence within the government.

I talked to a dozen National Conference workers in one of their headquarters about Communists in the government. One of them said, "We don't talk who is a Communist, we don't ask who is a Communist. Who knows what is in a man's heart? We only say, 'Is he for New Kashmir?'"

All these politicians, with their credos and conflicts, the "ins" and the "outs" with their offices and headquarters, official duties and private ambitions! Whom do they speak for? What do Kashmiris outside the political circles feel and think and say?

Not only am I incapable of answering that question, but I am reluctant to recount the results of my efforts to try to. I was in Kashmir only two weeks. Most of my time was spent in Srinagar and in villages in the vicinity. There was a language barrier. I was known as a Westerner or an American and some kind of journalist to boot. For those who believe that American policy on Kashmir is anti-Indian, I may have been someone to shun. By those who are pro-plebiscite or pro-Pakistan, I may have been especially sought out. I did, however, try.

The remarkable thing was that so few people would talk. In a restaurant I saw the sign "No Political Discussion" and asked, "Why not?" The proprietor shook his head. "The CID (police Criminal Investigation Division) would come here. People don't want to come if the CID comes."

So many people, boatmen, shopkeepers, farmers, hotel bearers, passers-by, fellow-horsecart passengers, approached openly or privately, indicated they couldn't say anything. "Don't know my name, Sahib," I was told by one who did talk. "Don't write it down," or "Don't be with me." Some passers-by whom I stopped said yes, they were quite in favor of India, but they were uneasy under questioning and moved off quickly. Perhaps they were bored, although that wasn't the facial expression.

The BBC correspondent from Delhi, who was in Srinagar at the same time, found it so difficult to find anyone to interview that he finally went to the government Press Information Bureau and asked for "a couple of pro-Indian stooges," and he was quickly supplied. I too had difficulty in locating pro-Indians outside of government employees, National Conference workers and reporters on the party paper, Hindu businessmen, and the young men hanging around Srinagar's Red Square in the evening who are regarded as National Conference followers. Their comments covered the whole range of arguments I have represented earlier as the Indian viewpoint, with an emphasis on the point that "things have settled." "Look around you and see the progress," said a silk merchant. "Should we give all this up?"

A college student got nods of approval from those around us when he said: "Disregard accession. Say it did not happen. Accept plebiscite. How would I vote? On what I think India and Pakistan can do for us in Kashmir. What has Pakistan done in democratic elections or economic development? What have they done in 'Azad' Kashmir? We have land reforms, roads, education, community development and all that. These things they are doing here. Pakistan hasn't even said what it would do if it came here." He hoped the cease-fire line would become the permanent international boundary.

My second day in Srinagar, I was walking along when a man passing by whispered, "Pakistan zindabad" ("Long live Pakistan") and kept moving. This very thing happened several times, and there were many furtive incidents of this kind. A tailor who mended my trousers said quietly, "Tell the people in America we want a plebiscite---for Pakistan." A portly man, a passer-by, once fell in stride, said "Sheikh Abdullah" while clapping his hand around his wrist to simulate a handcuff, and moved away. On a visit to a Muslim shrine, I was looked over carefully by a young man, who then sidled up and breathed, "We are all Pakistanis. We want a plebiscite." One day I returned to my bicycle, parked in front of a shop, and found a note folded small and stuck in the handlebar: "Our leader is Sheikh Mohd Abdulla. We want Pelebisite & freedom from Indian army and Indian yoke...We beg you to convey this mesage to the U.N.O. quarters that Kashmiri want only pelebisite. I am a Kashmiri youngman..."

Perhaps there was some well organized campaign going on, and the clandestine air had a calculated effect. At any rate, no one of these chance acquaintances who expressed any doubt about accession to India or criticized the Bakhshi government (or, much less, flatly favored Pakistan) did so openly. There was always a whisper, a doorway, a place with no unknown person around; precautionary glances were the rule.

Sometimes I would take a "tough" line. Why do you want Pakistan, that country with so many troubles? I asked a wood-carver. "We know Pakistan

is a poor country. We know India is big. Let them be bigger! We do not care for their crores (ten millions) of rupees!" He laughed. "We will use them, but in the heart we are Pakistanis. We are Muslims here." He began to complain that the "Indians" had put some chemicals in the drinking water and had ruined his digestion.

Again and again, people who were pro-plebiscite or pro-Pakistan told me, "We are Pakistanis. We are Muslims." No! I insisted. Don't you know that Kashmir is in India now? Some accepted this meekly, some grew suspicious, and some smiled at me and repeated, "No, we are Muslims" or "Hindus in India, Muslims in Pakistan."

Abdullah is obviously an appealing figure to many of the people I talked to. Some people looked to him to "bring us to Pakistan." This is wishful, for Abdullah, who vacillated between union with India and independence for Kashmir, never advocated accession to Pakistan. Again, many of these people were set against the permanent division of Kashmir, and their sense of Kashmir-ness ("We are Kashmiris first! and "The blood of Kashmir runs in our veins!") appeared to be strong.

Michael Brecher in his book The Struggle for Kashmir (New York: Oxford University Press, 1953) suggested that the reason most foreigners who visit Kashmir get the impression that a plebiscite in Kashmir would provide a majority for Pakistan is that foreigners for the most part meet those people who are dependent on the tourist trade for a living. This tourist-dependent community prefers Pakistan, he argued, because they remember that the old principal highway goes to Pakistan and they believe that accession that way would provide more foreign tourists and residents-on-leave via that road. Maybe, but likewise the tourist-dependent community may now be inclined to forgo the uncertainties of some future tourist trade from Pakistan along a highway blocked for nine years, in favor of the present trade from India which is more than twice the volume of pre-Partition days, partly due to a new main highway to India.

It's hard to say. I've asked many Indians which way the Kashmiris would vote in an election. The usual answer was the equivalent of "It's hard to say." Few claimed that India would win.

How would a plebiscite go? It would depend, needless to say, on who held it and when, the sort of campaigning and how the question were asked. There is little argument about what the vote would be in Jammu province, where the people are acknowledged to be steadfastly pro-Indian and 1.1 million of the 1.2 million population is Hindu. About the northern area of Ladakh, the sparsely populated area of mountains and mountain valleys, I have no sound estimate, but indications are that the people would prefer to remain with India.

The question boils down to what the people in the valley of Kashmir would do. There are some big question marks: Most important, is communalism---defined either as the tie that binds those of common religious, social and cultural background, or extremism that battens on societal divisions, perpetuates animosity and breeds violence---the number one factor in the political lives of Kashmiris? Have India and the Bakhshi government been successful in assuring Kashmiris that their future is happy and safe if they remain on the path they are being led along? To what extent have agrarian and other reforms and development projects won, or bribed, Kashmiris to the Indian side? The questions can go on and on.



There would, of course, be other voters from among the 1.1 or so million people who live under pro-Pakistan administration in 'Azad' Kashmir.

What is there to conclude from all this? There seems to be no point in criticizing the Indian and Pakistani arguments. The two countries handle that problem quite well. There are, however, a few points I should express an opinion on. First, Pakistan's role in the invasion of Kashmir was utterly detestable and its denial of complicity amounts to a lie. But India's right to be appalled by this misconduct should be judged in the light of her own strong-armed role in Junagadh and Hyderabad, the other two disputed states. Second, I have my doubts about the Maharajah's accession. I am dubious about its legal immaculacy, not because it was "fraudulently procured," as charged, but because I am uncertain about a ruler's ability, while in flight, to accede parts of his domain which, due to the invasion, had passed out of his control. Third, India and Pakistan are equal partners to the Kashmir dispute. The blame for the impasse over arrangements for demilitarization and plebiscite administration belongs to both of them, although the UN erred in being ambiguous. Fourth, neither nation is qualified to regard itself as able to take an impartial administrative role in a plebiscite without full UN control.

But can a plebiscite be held at all now? I doubt it. And now, it seems, the blame for obstruction will fall chiefly on India, for India says it will not surrender its sovereignty over the area under its control, while Pakistan is more amenable to making concessions (which are lesser). The regrettable thing is that the surrender of sovereignty is precisely what is needed to ensure an impartial plebiscite.

But the stakes for India and Pakistan are so high now: the political and ideological interests, the economic and strategic concerns, the questions of domestic political balance and international prestige, and, steeped in rancor, the deep emotional commitments of the two nations.

Pakistan thinks in terms of 1947, and sees Kashmir as part of "unfinished" Partition. India thinks in terms of 1957, and sees Kashmir as a troublesome situation that should be recognized as settled. Who is right? Pakistan, having seen Indian-administered Kashmir brought step by step into the Union of India, must view the current UN discussions as its last chance to settle the problem peacefully and advantageously. India, in possession of the choicest part of Kashmir, benefits from continuation of the status quo and would be willing to settle for a division of Kashmir along the cease-fire line. India stands athwart Pakistan's hopes, and Pakistan will not be content to see India satisfied.

I do not think that the UN can produce an agreement between India and Pakistan on an operable plebiscite, nor can the two countries agree by themselves. And I do not think that the UN can force its way into Kashmir to hold a plebiscite.

The burden for action would then fall on Pakistan, as the more aggrieved party, which is ironical enough, considering India's original complaint. In that case, the Government of Pakistan may prove wiser and more restrained than many of the people who find themselves most deeply involved. I can imagine mass unrest, incidents, and even war.

If peaceful and warlike settlement are equally remote, the world will, I suppose, just keep on having "the Kashmir problem." The world has plenty of others. This one, to me, is especially sad.