



# STRUGGLE FOR FREEDOM IN KASHMIR: A HISTORICAL DOCUMENT

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**Dedicated to**

**All those who are struggling to liberate Kashmir**

# STRUGGLE FOR FREEDOM IN KASHMIR: A HISTORICAL DOCUMENT

by Prabir Ghosh

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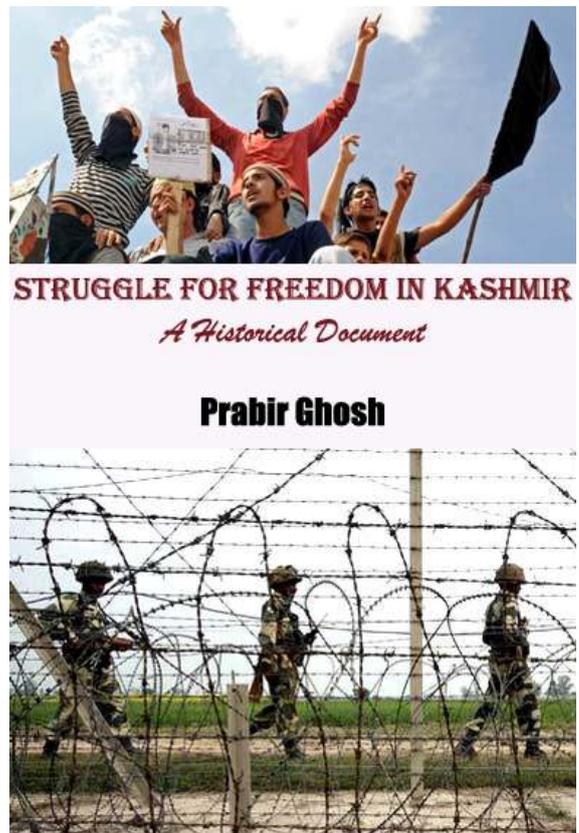
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## About the author



Prabir Ghosh is the pioneer of the rationalist movement and General Secretary of the Science & Rationalists' Association of India; these are all old facts about him. The reality which is steadily surfacing to his readers is that his ideas of rationalism are moving on its way from explaining "paranormals" to various facets of sociology, politics and psychology is now sketching a realistic model of a social arrangement of commonness and equality. "Neo-Socialism" a brain child of Prabir Ghosh, has established its strong footing in countries like Nepal, Venezuela and Bolivia. In concurrence with his design, self-sufficient villages with the aid of communes, co-operatives, joint farming etc had been set up in more than a third of the six hundred districts in India.

At the time when resolving the Kashmir dispute was nothing more than an unattainable and unrealistic thought, he inked "Kashmir issue: A Historic Document", an authentic history of Kashmir. He had to take a huge risk to do it. He spoke about the legitimate rights of the Kashmiris which is now getting universally accepted.

During the long 25 years of his crusade Channel 4 of London, National Geographic Channel and German Television have made documentary films on him.

Prabir Ghosh is there in "Wikipedia", with his usual stature and importance.

## Foreword

The Indian historians have always written down history as ordered by their rulers. Quite understandably, what they wrote was anything but history. Other than a few exceptions, this had so far been the tradition of India.

Did ever any historian tell us that on 15<sup>th</sup> August, 1947, the British Government didn't award independence to India? Instead, it was recognized as a "self-ruled dominion" of the British administration. Lord Mountbatten became the first Governor General and the Ex-Officio Army Chief of this self-ruled dominion.

Did we ever hear from any historian that on 21<sup>st</sup> June, 1948, the self-governed India chaired its first Indian Governor General? He was Chakravarty Rajagopalachari. In the swearing in ceremony on that day, the formal oath he took read "I, Chakravarty Rajagopalachary, hereby pledge to remain loyal and maintain obedience towards King George VI, his heirs and successors..."

Our childhood textbooks and teachers have been telling us that August 15, 1947 was the day India got independence.

What is my reference? You can and should ask me this. I'm not interested about those who would blindly disagree. However, those who are inclined to know the truth...please visit the National Library of Kolkata (largest library in India) and check out the photocopies of the dailies published on 16<sup>th</sup> August, 1948 and 22<sup>nd</sup> June, 1948. You will find the truth.

As far as we know, many textbooks available in book stores by scholarly authors are actually written by young college students for some fast buck. Some of the publishers make them do so. Then, they buy the goodwill of those "scholars" and print their names as authors.

So, what we get are those highly diluted non-readable books, which even get recommended by many educational institutions.

Regarding Kashmir, there are innumerable books in the market having tampered, fabricated and fictitious contents claiming to be the “real” history of the region. These books are written by the authors themselves instead of the ghost-writers. In return of writing down such phony history, the authors get blessings from the government in various forms.

Kashmir was once an independent nation. Today, Kashmir is divided by India and Pakistan and kept under their illegitimate dominance. The Indians perceive that a part of Kashmir had been occupied by Pakistan. They take Kashmir to be their integral part. In the same way, Pakistan believes that Kashmir actually belongs to them and India has crept into a part of it. The inhabitants of Kashmir do not identify themselves with either India or Pakistan. They introduce themselves as Kashmiris. They consider India and Pakistan as nothing but invaders.

The *locus-standi* of the idea of the people of these three regions revolve around three different axes. The viewpoint of the Indian and the Pakistani government is however, entirely different. They can go to any extent to finalize the sharing out of Kashmir among them.

Both of these governments are quite experts in inciting their citizens with crazy jingoism. They do it purposefully to either inflate their ballot boxes or inject stability to a stumbling cabinet. The history of their mutual “war games” is also known. Both of these governments had been successful in the making of a public opinion that the “Kashmir dispute” is a matter concerning India and Pakistan, which can be sorted out only through bilateral dialogue. The demand of the Kashmiris was to include them as well to take a decision on their future. All political parties that contest elections in Pakistan and India vouched for a bipartite settlement to resolve the Kashmir issue. They took such a stand to stay away from “hurting” the public sentiment.

The key to the solution of the Kashmir dispute lies in its history. Here, in this book, I have narrated the history of Kashmir without any prejudice and bigotry.

This evidential document was first published in England. At that point of time, it was impossible to get it printed from India. It was expected that the tag of a “state enemy” would be stamped on my head affecting my career and resulting in my arrest or death in “encounter”.

This was the apprehension of my friends. Thus, I resigned from my job with the State bank of India. My only son, at that time, was a student.

I decided to get it published from England. Once it got rapidly publicized in the larger part of the world, it can be done from India as well, without any fear, I presumed.

Shafique Ahmad, a friend of mine, is a Bangladeshi who lives in England. He arranged for the publication of the first edition of the book “Kashmir issue: A historic document” from London. It was during the early part of 1999. Within ten days of its publication, journalists from various renowned newspapers and television channels arrived in my tiny rented apartment. A synopsis of the document was published in numerous dailies and magazines all around the world. It created such a churn that I felt it safe to publish it from India as well.

In this way, the first copy of the text was published in India on 2<sup>nd</sup> October, 1999. By that time, it had been brought out in a large number of regional and international journals and periodicals. It also appeared in the mouthpieces and organs of many political parties. After such a huge flow of things, the situation underwent a drastic change. The issue came up for debate in many seminars and consortiums. Today, every political party from the CPI (M) to BJP has fallen in line in the matter of a tripartite settlement on Kashmir. The role of the document to bring about this transformation is undeniable.

Let me recall a small event. In 1999, the publisher of the document on behalf of the Humanists' Association was its President, a 'rebellious' doctor of a state owned hospital. The moment it was published, he resigned from the association fearing arrest. At that time, many, who were otherwise "rebels", kept away from us.

In this book, there are references to history, in a much more detailed and modified form.

It had been suffixed with a chapter titled "Battle for freedom"; without these current details the history of Kashmir would have remained elusive.

**Prabir Ghosh,**

18<sup>th</sup> March, 2011

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## Chapter 1

### **Kashmir: The narration of infidelity**

## **When nothing sells like jingoism**

Am I mistiming this article? Or is this just the time I should write it?

“The Kargil war news is a big hit in public. The sale of almost all newspapers has swelled. It’s so difficult to sneak in any other story at this juncture.” This is what the Joint Editor of a Kolkata based daily told me at his office somewhere in the mid of June. Yes, the initial stuffing of this book was penned in 1999, during the Kargil war.



Kargil war

A well-known publisher of a Hindi journal flew in to Kolkata from Allahabad to analyze the possibilities of bringing out its Bengali edition. The purpose was to make the most from the prevailing public mood on Kargil war and reap in a striking profit.

War has become a commodity for the newspapers and TV channels, so are the lifeless soldiers. The mass-media of both India and Pakistan are

promoting the chivalry of their soldiers and helping to let loose passions of trivial and shallow patriotism amongst their respective populace. The stories of a bride giving out all her ornaments...a university student doing a cobbler's job to donate the money...working people shedding off a day's salary, all for the war fund...celebrities reaching the war zone to inspire the soldiers.....are creating havoc. Such scenario is similar in both nations. It's not always that a student or a bride acts that way only out of emotions. In many cases, they do it for a gimmick...a stunt you can say, to gain some instant publicity. The poor working people loose a day's salary, not always at their will; they do it because they have to. The market of patriotism is soaring high, and they had to take the punch. The fund raised in such manner is negligible in comparison to the total war expense, but a good move indeed to keep the national tempo high. For performers, this war and the resulting death are commodities in most cases. Those who are getting killed are getting so as it is part of their job; not for any patriotic feeling. Humans are getting assassinated by humans. When a Pakistani soldier dies, Indians celebrate and vice versa. A panorama of inhumanity!

Are they all patriots? Does patriotism mean unquestionable loyalty to the government? Does anything otherwise means an act of deceit? Who will do the branding of a "patriot" or a "state enemy"? Will the politicians immersed in corruption and dishonesty do so? Half of the Indian populace has no access to potable drinking water, elementary education or basic health care even after 60 years of the so called independence. At least 30% of the population can't imagine getting a square meal, can't even think of having a shelter of their own, although it is the duty of the Indian state to provide so. Will such exploited, deprived people be branded as "state enemy", if they yell "Give me food you scoundrel, else I will eat up your map." ( lines from a well-known poem in Bengali) The huge section of the famished population, deprived of the light of literacy do not know whether Kargil is the name of a foodstuff or hair oil? They remain uninformed, as they have no scope to pursue the luxuries of reading a newspaper or watching a news channel. Are we going to tag their fight for justice as "anti-national"? Will those who have kept them under such awful condition for years with promises of false hopes and kept the juggernaut of exploitation

rolling to fill in their own coffers decide the definition of “patriotism” or “anti-nationalism”?

A nation does not merely mean a cluster of land, rivers and mountains. It also means the people living there. Patriotism means love for the people of a land, love for the neglected mass. If you keep in mind this description of patriotism, you can easily differentiate between a patriot and a turncoat.

In the last 52 years there had been repeated Indo-Pak wars over the issue of Kashmir. What an appalling predicament this has been; a desperate, suicidal issue for India, Pakistan and Kashmir! “No war but peace”...will this remain a catchphrase, just for the sake of it? Or are we going to be honestly honest in our efforts in bringing peace?

The Indian and the Pakistani government are now riding on a tiger named “Kashmir”. Any of them getting down will fall prey to that tiger. Both of these governments are frantic in exploiting the Kashmir issue to tide over elections. The Indian government is headed by Atal Behari Vajpayee. The Pakistan government led by Nawaz Sharif is also trying desperately to defend itself from a twofold assault of its military and judiciary by creating a wave of anti-Indian sentiment amongst its people. Thus, any government retreating from war will be ripped through by the opposition and mass fury. The situation reminds me of an old rhyme which says...” Whenever people demand clothes and food, the boundaries rise up in war mode”.

There is an apparent possibility that the undeclared Kargil war is a friendly arrangement by the Indian and Pakistani government to protect their own interest of political survival. It is more felt so because in the Kargil area, the demand to free Kashmir through armed battle by the *Mujahidins* (freedom fighters) is nothing out of the blue. They had been quite active in that region for a pretty long time. It is also nothing new that they have the backing of the Pakistan army on this issue. It is in-fact well known to both the Indian and the Pakistan government. However, when they intended to go for a war, the Indian government pretended as if they had just been intimated of the anti-Indian activities in the Kargil area.

The game started off well according to the plan, but steadily the situation went out of control. The Nawaz Sharif government, which could not make much headway in the war, is under immense pressure from his military chiefs to not to stoop down to face the Indian ambush, under any circumstances. The military chiefs there are now like tigers who have tasted blood. Nawaz Sharif knows that his back-tracking may pave way for a military coup. For the Indian government, Kargil is now a weapon to keep them in power. In the forthcoming parliamentary elections of 1999, Kargil will indeed prove to be a blazing issue that will steer the mass sentiments and inflate the ballot boxes.

None of the opposition parties dared to object to such immoral intention of the ruling BJP and its allies to exploit “patriotism” as an election agenda. We understand that the political parties contesting elections in India cannot always afford to come out with the truth. They know that if they don’t go with the created jingoism, they will be marked as “anti-national”. So, what they try to put out of sight is:

**A nation to be powerful needs food, clothes, shelter, potable water, education and health care. Weapons cannot be an alternative to that. A nation where the majority of the people die a terrible death under starvation and ailment can never be strong through battle of arms.**

Thus, instead of putting up any resistance to such unethical strategy of BJP, all opposition parties including the Congress (I) and CPI (M) did their best to fan up the jingoism further, to get the most out of it in terms of ballots. To deal with the Kargil war situation, Congress (I) proposed the formation of a national government that will include the opposition as well. Clearly they wanted their chunk of “patriotic” share as well, so that the entire credit doesn’t go to BJP. Sonia Gandhi, the Congress (I) president made rounds of the army hospitals to see the wounded soldiers, donated blood in her effort to look enough “patriotic”. Jyoti Basu, the Marxist Chief Minister declared, “Our complete support is with the Indian army” (The Statesman dated 8/7/1999). Former Army General Shankar Roy Chowdhury too didn’t miss the chance to put in further ignition. He wrote about the war in Anandabazar Patrika (the most circulated Bengali daily in India). This inspired the

Congress (I) and CPI (M) to join hands and send Shankar Roy Chowdhury to Rajya Sabha (Upper house of the Indian parliament) from West Bengal. They did so in spite of being aware that Roy Chowdhury is incredibly close to the RSS and BJP. He is a regular speaker in their events and one of the vocal supporters of the Pokhran explosion.

The Indian and Pakistan defense budget in 1998 was 10.116 million USD and 3.551 Million USD respectively. The per day outflow of the Indian government towards the Kargil war has not been provided. During the war, an interview with Indian Finance Minister was aired by the BBC World News. There, it was informed by BBC that the Indian government is spending 3.808 million USD per day to meet the cost of war. Each shell of the Bofors cannon is being bought from South Africa at a price ranging from 928 USD to 1126 USD. The cost of one laser guided missile used in the war is 0.221 million USD. It may be noted that the Indian Finance Minister didn't object to the above figures. Even after such huge spending, the mass media, ruling party and the Indian military bosses are striving for more sophisticated weapons. The set-up is similar in Pakistan as well.

Although the war equipments in India are manufactured by state owned organizations, it's well connected with big capital agencies. We can already hear the demand for private investment in the defense sector.

Pakistan has already procured "Mirage-III", a supersonic fighter aircraft from France.

**This huge war expense is to be borne by the starving populace of both the nations. The money allotted for their education, housing, employment, health care and other developmental work will be tossed down into the hungry belly of war. The war will help the ruling party to cater to their vested political interest. Capitalists and war equipment agents will mint money. And, the common people will slide further down towards distress.**

The mass media of both India and Pakistan are spending tons of newsprint with the sole aim of glorifying the chivalrous escapades of their military. They, however, didn't pen down a single word for the homeless and

destitute refugees of Kargil. They know that if they do so, it will undermine their ongoing propaganda. According to the government reports, near about 26,000 Kashmiris in Kargil have fled to save their lives, leaving their homes and property. The figure is unknown in part of Kashmir under the administrative control of Pakistan. We have no such information that any fund has been created in India or Pakistan to assist these war effected public by shedding off a days' paycheck. Don't you think that it should have been done for the sake of humanity?

**In this war there is bound to be one winner. The one side to achieve victory will certainly not be the common people of either India or Pakistan. The reason is that the war is not against deprivation and poverty. Instead, it is to create more poverty and scarcity and to serve narrow political interests.**

For poverty ridden Indians and Pakistanis, this war is to guard the dominion and sovereignty of their respective nation. On the other hand, the Kashmiris believe, they are freedom fighters and not terrorists. Are these thoughts and beliefs close to reality and truth? To know the answer, we need to unfold the history of Kashmir. There is no other way.

**Kashmir- whom do you belong to?**

Right from 1947, both India and Pakistan have deliberately kept the Kashmir debate live and used the issue as their respective political capital. The tension over the issue between the two nations .resulting in big to small wars will continue, till the issue is resolved. The political pundits, who predicted that there will be no more hostilities between these two countries after both got possession of nuclear weapons, have been proved wrong. At present, both are again in combat mood.



### Gradual militarization

The reason again is the Kashmir issue. The politicians and political parties of both India and Pakistan, to dish up their own political interest, are desperate to pretend as patriots to their respective populace. These pretenders will never unravel the way out, in fact, they just can't do it. At present, there are three ways one can permanently resolve the dispute:-

- To accept the parts of Kashmir in control of India and Pakistan, as theirs.
- Allow the people of Kashmir to determine their future. They can opt for autonomy or stick to India or Pakistan as state or self-controlled territory.
- To acknowledge and accept the aspiration of Kashmiris for independence.

Through the above suggestions, I'm trying to dig into the theoretical part of this discussion; nothing more and nothing less. In case, the Indian and the Pakistan government opt for any of the above proposals, they will face the rage of their own people. Thus, the future of any government going for it will surely be doomed. A doom created and nurtured through crazy jingoism. After so many years the government is taking a U-turn on Kashmir

and stepping into the shoes of an anti-national...if this is what the public perceives, can we blame them? This is what the two governments have carefully instilled into their mind for ages. By virtue of the mass-media and governments of the two nations, **most of the Indians and Pakistanis believe that Kashmir is an integral part of their country. The enemy nation has, by hook or crook, captured a part of Kashmir and it is our devout responsibility to free our land from the clutches of usurpers. On the other side, the Kashmiris believe that Kashmir was an independent nation, even at the time when India was under the British rule. They believe that both India and Pakistan have encroached upon their autonomy.**

### **The key to bring in peace**

The Indo-Pak peace largely depends on a solution to the Kashmir row. To India, Kashmir is an addition to its existing problems. Round the year, the Indian government has to deploy a huge contingent of armed forces to contain the rebel Kashmiris. In spite of this, the casualties in Indian Army keep on rising in Kashmir, mostly by the radicals. What a bunch of rowdies!

<b>1990</b>	<b>1991</b>	<b>1992</b>
516 soldiers	652 soldiers	740 soldiers

The same is plight of the rebels killed by the Indian security forces. According to a report published in India Today dated 15<sup>th</sup> May, 1991, the figures indicating casualty of the rebels of the previous year (1990) are : May:158, June: 201, July: 286. If Kashmir is like any other Indian state, then why is there so much of bloodshed? Something must be terribly wrong somewhere? “Where” is that “somewhere”?

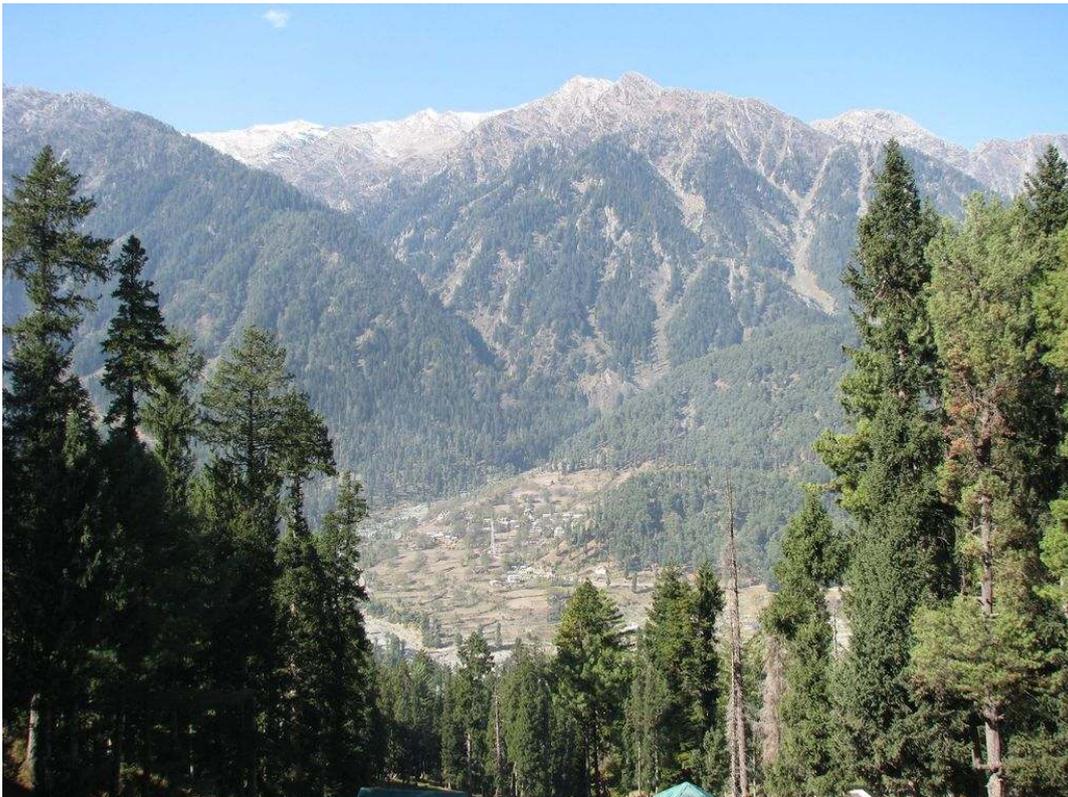
**To understand the reason why Kashmir is always on fire...a blazing issue...the key factor of Indo-Pak relations, we need to get an unprejudiced insight into the history of Kashmir. It is the pre-requisite,**

**a crucial stipulation you may say, to establish peace in the region. Why is it so? The answer blows in the history of Kashmir.**

### **Let us look at the times gone by in Kashmir**

Srinagar (the capital of Kashmir under India's control), was founded by the Emperor Ashoka during the 3rd century BC. Jaluka, the successor of Ashoka became the ruler of Kashmir. At that time, Buddhism spread to a large extent in Kashmir. Even today in the Ladakh region of Kashmir, Buddhists enjoy certain legal immunities and advantages.

Buddhism reached further popularity during rule of the Kushan dynasty (50 to 210 AD approximately).



Kashmir Valley

The Hun dynasty took control of the territory during the 6<sup>th</sup> century AD. In 627 AD, Durlabha Vardana, the founder of Karkota dynasty, got the region of Kashmir as his marriage gift. During his governance, many Hindu temples including the Martanda temple were constructed in Kashmir.

In the 8<sup>th</sup> century AD, Shankaracharya, the spokesman of Hindu resurgence, visited Kashmir to preach Hinduism. Since then, the worshipper of Lord Shiva, forms the majority among Kashmiri Hindus.

Islam followed in Kashmir after arrival of Buddhism and Hinduism. In 1339AD, Shah Mirza captured a part of Kashmir and originated the Lohar Dynasty.

Shah Mir, a minister in the courtroom of Udayanadeva, a Hindu king of Kashmir, killed him and acquired the kingship in 1346 AD.

In 1546 AD, Emperor Akbar brought Kashmir under the Mughal reigns. During the era of Jahangir and Shahjahan, the Islam religion became enormously accepted amongst Kashmiris. Concurrently, it was during this phase that Kashmir achieved worldwide fame in the production of carpets, blankets, embroidered articles and other art works.

The Afghan era in Kashmir was founded in 1751 AD by Ahmad Shah Abdali. It was since then that Afghans struck a close relation with Kashmiris.

Kashmir came under the Sikh dynasty in 1789 AD. Even today a faction of Sikhs is found in Kashmir.

The Sikhs suffered defeat at the hands of the British in 1846 AD. In the peace accord, the British demanded 7.5 million INR, which the Sikhs could not pay. Instead, they gave away Kashmir valley to the British. **The British in turn sold off Kashmir to Gulab Singh, the Dogra ruler, for 0.01 billion INR.** They did so as it was awfully difficult for the British to rule

this tribal dominated impenetrable landscape. According to the treaty, Gulab Singh became the autonomous tributary (by paying tax in return of independence) king of Kashmir. Henceforth, Kashmir never came under the British Empire. After the death of Gulab Singh, the Dogra rulers who autonomously presided over the governance of Kashmir were Ranbir Singh (1857-1885 AD), Pratap Singh (1885-1925 AD) and Hari Singh (1925-1949 AD).

### **Insurgence against monarchy**

Like in India, the people were demanding freedom from the British rule, the Kashmiris too began their battle to displace Hari Singh's monarchy and establish democracy. There was no British governance in Kashmir and so, there was no movement against the British.

The movement against King's rule in Kashmir was piloted by "**All Jammu and Kashmir Muslim Conference**" (AJKMC). **The leader of the conference was Sheikh Mohammad Abdullah.** Although the political party had the "Muslim" prefix, their movement included many educated Hindus, who stood against the autocracy and anarchy of the Hindu ruler.

In the year 1934, Hari Singh, being troubled under the mounting pressure brought in some reforms in governance. A council was set up to help out Hari Singh in governing Kashmir. The council was constituted by members, mostly nominated by Hari Singh himself. The President of the council was also an officer appointed by Hari Singh. A committee was formed by Hari Singh to decide on the voting rights of people who would be eligible to elect council members.

In the year 1938, Jawaharlal Nehru, a Kashmiri himself, sent a proposal to Sheikh Abdullah his family friend, to delete the word "Muslim" from the name of the Conference.



Sheikh Mohammad Addullah

In June 1939, the suggestion to alter the party's name to "Kashmir National Conference" was accepted through a ballot (17 of 20 members voting in favor). Hari Singh, under the swelling pressure of the uprising bowed down further and made a few more modifications in the governance. He made an expansion to the governing council with inclusion of additional members. Most of those members were Hindu landholders, although the majority of the populace was Muslim.

The Akhil Bharatiya Hindu Mahasabha (a Hindu nationalist political party in India) and Rashtriya Swayamsevak Sangh or RSS (an umbrella group of Hindu nationalist organizations), stood by Hari Singh and attempted to paint a communal shade to the battle of Kashmiris against king's rule. The fight for freedom was campaigned as a movement of Muslims against the Hindu king. Hari Singh too, to save his throne, got himself bracketed together with the Hindu communal forces.

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