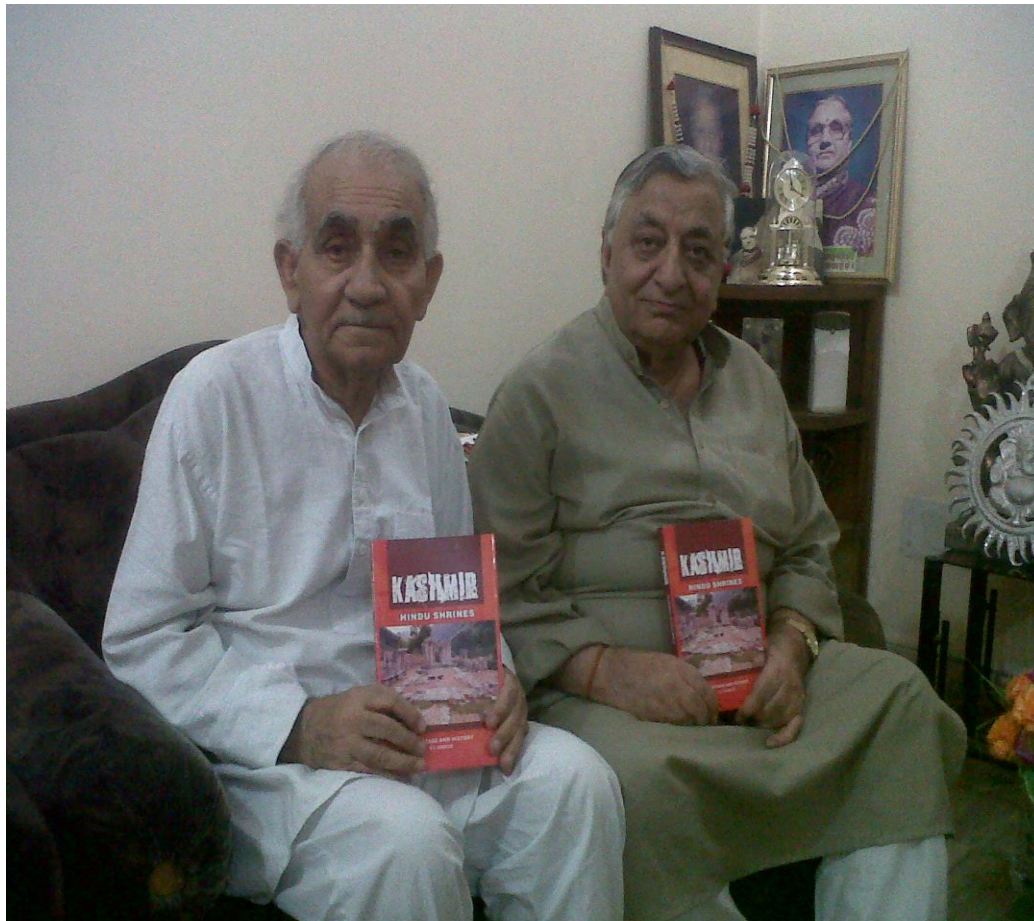


KASHMIR---THE BITTER TRUTH



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KASHMIR---THE BITTER TRUTH

That the Princely States of India, including Jammu and Kashmir State, were on the agenda of the partition of India in 1947, is a travesty of history and a part of the diplomatic offensive, Pakistan has launched to mislead the international opinion about its claim to Jammu and Kashmir. The matter of the fact is that the lapse of Paramountcy was a consequence of the dissolution of the British Empire in India and the political imperatives of the authority, the British Crown exercised over the princely States. The withdrawal of the Paramountcy was not a concomitant or a consequence of the Indian partition, and neither the June 3 Declaration of 1947; nor did the independence of India Act, embodied any provision by virtue of which the partition of India affected the Princely States or the British Paramountcy.

The British colonial empire in India was divided into two separate and different political organizations, the British India constituted of the British Indian Provinces and the India of Princes. The British India was directly governed by the British Government through the Governor-General of India, with each of the Provinces in charge of a Provincial Governor, who in the old British tradition, administered the Provinces, with the help of the Indian Civil Service.

The Princely States were ruled by local potentates, who had carved their independent fiefs and kingdoms in the long and atrocious process of the British expansion in India. Five hundred and sixty two in number, the Indian States formed a conglomerate of widely disparate identities in their territories, population and government. The Princes were British feudatories, who accepted the supremacy of the British Crown, which was symbolized in the person of the Crown Prince, or the Viceroy of India. The relations between the British Crown and the States were governed by what the British called, the "Paramountcy". Paramountcy in real terms, described the extent of the authority the British exercised over the States.

Apparently, the rulers of the States were vested with the powers to rule their States, but in actual practice, the States were administered by the British officers, whose functions were determined by the Viceroy, the Political Department of the Government of India and the British Residents posted in the States. The Princes represented the best of the oriental splendor, with their treasuries held by the British, and their privy purses plentifully provided.

The Partition of India, which loomed large on the horizons after the failure of the Cabinet Mission and the campaign of "Direct Action" launched by the Muslim League, suddenly pushed the States into the fore-front. Interspersed in the British Indian Provinces, the States were spread over more than one third of the territory of India and constituted about a hundred million people, almost a quarter of the population of India.

The British, the Muslim League for their own interests, did not favour the inclusion of the Princely States, in the constitutional reforms, the Indian liberation movement idealized. The British held the States as a personal preserve, protected the Princes against their people and harnessed the resources of the States to promote the interests of their empire. The Princes, of their privileges and unrestricted power over their subjects, supported the British, to isolate themselves from any constitutional change which prejudiced their position.

The Indian renaissance evoked a widespread response in the Princely States, and the liberation movement in India received as much support from the people of the States as it did in the British Indian Provinces. In fact, the revolutionary struggle, which followed the Swadeshi Movement in the aftermath of the stormy session of the Indian National Congress at Calcutta in 1906, grew in the States, where numerous revolutionaries received quarter.

The Congress leaders, however, on the insistence of the Princes and the Muslim League, withdrew its movement from the States, and till almost the end of the British rule, refused to integrate the people's movements in the States avowedly inspired by the liberation of India, with the national struggle against the British in the Provinces. The Congress leaders were neither prepared to displease the Princes, who were the mantle of Indian nativity, nor did they dare to disregard the Muslim League leaders, who made the exclusion of the hundred million people of the Princely States, a precedent condition to any compromise on the constitutional reforms in India. The League leaders knew that the inclusion of the people of the States, predominantly Hindu, would reduce the weightage of the Muslim population in the British India in any future scheme of constitutional change.

Throughout the long decades, the Indian national movement evolved, the Congress leadership remained divided on the anti-imperialist struggle in the States and the All-India Congress Committee did not formalise its opinion on the States till the Udaipur session of the All-India States People's Conference held in 1946. By that time, however, much precious time had been lost. The States had almost been isolated from the mainstream of the national movement and stood vulnerably exposed to the machinations of the British, the Muslim League and the Princes to balkanize India.

The Muslim League policy on the States was more involved and shifting, which concealed the designs of the League to grab the Muslim ruled Hindu majority States as well as the Muslim majority States for the separate Muslim State of Pakistan, the League demanded for the Muslims in India. The All-India States Muslim League, an appendage of the Muslim League, constituted to co-ordinate the Muslim movements for Pakistan in the States, demanded in 1940, the integration of all such Indian States in the Muslim homeland of Pakistan as were ruled by the Muslim rulers as well as all such States as were inhabited by Muslim majorities. The Lahore Resolution of the League, claimed a separate homeland for the Muslims in India, which was constituted of the Muslim majority Provinces of Sindh, the Punjab, Bengal, North-west Frontier, the Chief-Commissioner's Province of Baluchistan and the Hindu majority Province of Assam for its geographical contiguity to Bengal, besides the Princely States which were either ruled by the Muslim rulers or populated by Muslim majorities.

The Congress awoke to the dangerous consequences of the isolation of the States almost after it had virtually accepted the partition, when it realised that the British, in collaboration with the Muslim League, were conspiring to break up India into several imbecile political entities with the Muslim State of Pakistan strategically placed at their epicenter. That was precisely what Jinnah, Conrad Corfield, and the Political Department of the Government of India visualised as the future constitutional composition of India. The Cabinet Mission Plan also, by and large, envisaged the division of India into several political identities which were confined within the territorial jurisdiction of a united Indian Dominion. The Cabinet Mission precisely accepted the

separate identity of the Princely States and rejected any proposition to transfer the Paramountcy to the federal government. The Mission insisted upon the agreements between the federal authority and the Princely States, as a basis for any future relations between the States and the Indian Union which would follow their accession and withdrawal of the Paramountcy.

At the time, when the British and the Muslim League settled down to decide the fate of India, the Congress turned to the people in the States, whom they had neglected throughout the long history of Indian struggle against the British. Once again the Congress leaders fell prey to their own indecision and made a half-hearted plea for the right of the people of the States to determine their future. Not backed by conviction, the Congress demand made little impression upon the British and the League. The Princes were disparaged and opposed the right of the people in the States to determine their future. The League leaders turned the bend at the most appropriate time and in an astute move, pledged their support to the British designs to exclude the States from the constitutional arrangements envisaged by the partition and the withdrawal of the Paramountcy, to restore to the Princes, the powers which the British Crown exercised over them. The Muslim League realised that most of the States were populated by Hindu majorities and any arrangements to transfer Paramountcy to the two Dominions, would definitely place them in India. After the lapse of the Paramountcy, the Muslim League shared the optimism of British about independence of the States and their eventual alignment with the Muslim State of Pakistan, as a counterweight against India.

The Congress resolve, having been broken by the partition and the Congress leaders, still groping for a new rationale of the Indian freedom after their basic commitment to the unity of India was abandoned, did not stick to their demand for the right of the State's people to determine the future disposition of the States. Instead they acquiesced, without demur, with the British proposals to terminate the Paramountcy and restore the Princes the powers to decide their future affiliations with the two successor Dominions of India and Pakistan. The States were thus removed from the agenda of the Indian partition on the insistence of the British, the machinations of the Muslim League as well as the unconditional acceptance of the lapse of Paramountcy by the Congress.

The conspiracy proved to be deeper and though the British Government refused to accord the status of British Dominions to the Princely States, it left the door open for separate negotiations with their rulers. Mountbatten informed the Princes, that he would forward to the British Government any requests from anyone of them to establish direct relations with Great Britain.

When Jinnah met Mountbatten, a day before the acceptance of the partition plan was announced, he was triumphant. He had after all, carved out a Muslim State and also destroyed the bond of unity between British India and the Princely States. Jinnah did not conceal his satisfaction on the vivisection of India, which the Partition Plan, in fact envisaged." His delight was unconcealed", Mountbatten reported to London. "The Long campaign" the Viceroy mentioned in his report, "was virtually over there would be no Hindu government of an undivided India."

In fact, not only Jinnah, but the entire Muslim League accepted the creation of Pakistan on the terms the British offered. In the League Council, the Muslim League accepted by 400 votes to 8, the separation of the Muslim majority regions and the British provinces into an independent and separate Muslim State. The League Council

did not include the Princely States in the settlement with the British which created Pakistan.

So clear was the line drawn in the Partition Plan, between the division of the British India Provinces and the Princely States that the Secretary of the State for India, refused to accept any interference with the lapse of the Paramountcy or its consequence on the States or the two Dominions. The Viceroy wrote to the Secretary of the State to insert a clause into the Indian Independence Bill, limiting the powers of the Princely States which would revert to them with the lapse of the Paramountcy. The Secretary of State straightway rejected the suggestion to the satisfaction of both the Political Department of the Government of India as well as Muslim League. The British as well as the Muslim League, sought the reversion of Paramountcy to the Princes, as a part of the transfer of power, to leave any future alignments in India, in which the Princes would participate to be determined primarily by them, of course, with the Muslim State of Pakistan backing them up in what they decided to do.

The partition plan, envisaged by the June 3 Declaration, did not apply to the Indian States, which were left out of its procedure as well as its consequences. States were never placed on the agenda of the Partition of India, and therefore, the claim made by Pakistan to complete the agenda of the partition, by forcing India to cede the Muslim majority State of Jammu and Kashmir to it, has no historical or political relevance. Neither Pakistan nor India, laid any claim, to any Princely State on account of the partition, which was strictly limited to the agreement between the British, the Congress and the Muslim League to divide the boundaries of the British India and create the State of Pakistan.

The transfer of powers of India in 1947 involved the division of the British Indian Provinces, into two dominions, India and Pakistan and the liberation of the Indian States from the British Paramountcy. The two processes were distinctly separate and underlined political change, which led to different consequences. The Provinces were reorganized into two independent dominions; the States were released from the obligations of the Paramountcy and the rulers of the States were empowered to adhere to either of the two Dominions, irrespective of the communal division, the Indian partition underlined. The State Departments of India and Pakistan, headed by Sardar Vallabhai Patel and Sardar Abdur Rab Nishtar respectively, opened negotiations with the Princes, for separate political settlement, with them. Neither Patel nor Nishtar demanded, at any time, the adherence of any State to either of the Dominions on the basis of the partition of the British India.

Sardar Abdur Rab Nishtar offered whole-hearted support to the independence of the States, including the State of Jammu and Kashmir and strongly opposed any political arrangements, which were sought to be reached with the Princes on the basis of the division.

The Hidden Hand

It was again the invisible hand of the British, which sought to alter the balance and this time, it was no other person than Mountbatten himself, who, perhaps, having realised the force of the States People's movements for unity with India, sought to prepare the ground for a division of the Princely States between the two Dominions on the basis of the partition. Mountbatten realised that none of the Princes, who's States were geographically situated within the territories of the Indian Dominion, would be able

to hold out against the will of his subjects and the States would sooner or later join the Indian Dominion. He did not share the optimism of the British officers in India and at home and the leaders of the Muslim League, to save the Muslim ruled States from India. Instead he feared that the tide of the events would wipe off the Princes and India would absorb the States, perhaps sooner than anticipated.

He was more concerned about the Princely States, situated within the proposed boundaries of Pakistan, among which the ruler of the Kalat State, refused to accede to Pakistan. He was also apprehensive of the Jammu and Kashmir State, which would be left with contiguous borders with both the Indian Dominion and Pakistan and of which the ruler was not favourably disposed towards settlement with Pakistan. His fears about Jammu and Kashmir were confirmed by Hari Singh, the ruler of Jammu and Kashmir, who refused to accept his advice to arrive at an agreement with Pakistan.

Mountbatten went to the extent of ensuring India a viable border with Pakistan and played safe in the division of the Upper Bara Doab, and favoured the inclusion of the districts of Amritsar and Gurdaspur in India. On the States, Mountbatten had a different commitment, which was dictated by the interests of the British Empire. By the close of the month of July 1947, while the partition had begun to assume effect, Mountbatten was convinced that the borders of India should be confined to the Punjab, leaving the northern frontier of Jammu and Kashmir in safer and friendlier hands of Pakistan.

In his last address, he delivered to the Princes on 25 July 1947, in Delhi, Mountbatten spelt out certain broad guidelines for them to follow in the determination of the future disposition of their States. He advised the Princes to accede to either of the two Dominions on the basis of the geographical contiguity of their States and the composition of their population. In his endeavour to extend the partition to the States, he utilized V.P. Menon, who had a few months earlier prepared the blue-print for the partition of India, which formed basis of the transfer of power.

The Muslim League leaders scoffed at the advice of the Viceroy to the Princes and secretly counseled the Muslim Princes to ignore his address. They communicated to the Princes their readiness to support them in their independence. The Indian leaders, with V. P. Menon pulling the strings from behind, walked into the trap and entrusted the task of the negotiation with the Princes to Menon and Mountbatten. Mountbatten deliberately avoided taking a bold initiative on the Muslim-ruled States and Jammu and Kashmir to bring about their integration with India. Junagarh acceded to Pakistan; Hyderabad refused to join India and Jammu and Kashmir was pushed into the oblivion. Menon succeeded where the going was easy, with Mountbatten adding an element of diplomatic intrigue to an otherwise versatile comedy which the Princes enacted to accede to India. Mountbatten provided a long handle to Pakistan which that country is still using in Kashmir with devastating effect.

The British were no votaries of the Indian Unity and in the negotiations with the Indian leaders, preceding the acceptance of the partition of India, they kept the door open, for the Princes, to form a third, fourth and even a fifth estate in India, which in the new balances of power, between the two Dominions. Conrad Corfield and the Political Department of the Government of India as well as the Secretary of the State were determined to keep the States apart from the division of the British India and the transfer of power to the two Dominions.

The record indeed is straight. The lapse of Paramountcy released the Prince from the British tutelage and they were ensured the right to determine the future of their States by the British which assumed effect with their withdrawal from India. Pakistan had no right to any claim the Princely States which did not form a part of the British India. The Indian leaders in fact should have decisively claimed the States as a part of the colonial empire liberated from the British tutelage. They knew that Princes were only the shadows of their British masters, and they would neither dare to join Pakistan nor remain out of India after the British had boarded their ships for home. The only factor, which the Dominion of India could not overlook in regard to the States was the geographical location of several Princely States, within the territories, of which Pakistan was proposed to be constituted. No Government of India could have consciously taken the responsibility of seeking islands of territory inside the boundaries of Pakistan with all the military responsibility any such possession would entail. The Indian leadership understandably made no efforts to save the State of Kalat, where the ruler refused to accede to Pakistan and sought the help of the Indian leaders to save him from being swallowed by the League. Kalat was eventually smothered into submission by the continued pressure of the British, who backed Pakistan to acquire the States, contiguous to its territories which incidentally, included Bahawalpur as well.

Jinnah and the other leaders of the Muslim League had greater stakes in the States ruled by the Muslim Princes than they had in the Muslim majority of the Jammu and Kashmir State. They sought to keep the option open for the Muslim rulers to join Pakistan. And they did not close the option for the ruler of Jammu and Kashmir either. In fact, they offered to support Maharaja Hari Singh, in case he decided to opt for the independence of the State. Hari Singh saw through the game and refused to be used as a pawn in the British-League plan to keep the Muslim ruled States out of India.

Radcliffe Award

The Jammu and Kashmir state was contiguous to both India and Pakistan and had hundreds of miles of contiguous border with East Punjab and the Punjab Hill States, which had already decided to join India. Pakistan's propaganda has considerably clouded the real facts of the division of the Punjab. The division of the East Punjab from the west Punjab was not subject to the whims and caprices of the League leaders. They could not be ceded all the territories in the Punjab on which they laid their hands. They perpetrated a myth that the inclusion of the district of Gurdaspur in the East Punjab, contrary to their claims, was aimed to open up Jammu and Kashmir to India.

The division of the Punjab was entrusted to an independent Boundary Commission which the British constituted and which was headed by an Englishman, Sir Cyril Radcliffe, a lawyer of considerable repute. Besides its Chairman, the Commission constituted of four other members, two of them Din Mohammad and Mohammad Munir who represented the Muslims, Mehar Chand Mahajan represented the Hindus and Teja Singh represented the Sikhs whose culture, history and religious heritage were inextricably linked with the Punjab.

The Commission could not follow standards different in demarcating the Muslim majority regions in the west of the Punjab and the Hindu majority regions in the east of the Punjab. Pathankot was a Hindu majority Tehsil and it could not have been included in West Punjab by any stretch of imagination. The district boundaries were not strictly

adhered to by the Boundary Commission as the basis of the division of the Punjab and there was evidently no reason why a Hindu majority Tehsil, which was contiguous to the Punjab Hill States, should have been excluded from the East Punjab.

Pathankot apart, the whole of the district of Gurdaspur was strategically important not only from the view-point of a defensible Indian border, a major consideration, the Boundary Commission recognised in demarcating the boundaries of the East Punjab from the West Punjab but also in view of the future of the district of Amritsar which would be almost isolated into an island of Indian territory in the West Punjab. Amritsar was by no means a Muslim majority district and it could not be separated from the east Punjab for its significance to the Sikh Community. Amritsar symbolised the principal centre of the Sikh religion. Sikhs were by far the more important of the parties to the partition of the Punjab, because, a major part of their population was uprooted from the West Punjab where their main assets and lands were located and secondly the most sacred of their religious shrines were situated in the Muslim majority districts, which could not be retained in the East Punjab Gurdaspur formed the most strategic flank of the district of Amritsar.

The ruler of the Jammu and Kashmir State, Maharaja Hari Singh, had his own interests in the final delimitation of the new boundaries of the east and the west Punjab. Several of the Hindu leaders in the Punjab, among them notably Sir Shadi Lal and Bakhshi Tek Chand, kept him intimately informed of the proceedings of the Boundary Commission. The British were apprehensive about him, but through many of his British contacts, he had managed to convince the Political Department that he would not take any precipitate action, which would bring him into conflict with Pakistan. Hari Singh did not hide his interest in a balanced order with India and Pakistan and open access to the two Dominions. He conveyed to the British Resident and the Political Department a veiled threat that he would be forced to deal directly with the Indian Government, if any attempts were made to isolate his state in the boundary demarcation of the Punjab, irrespective of the consequences his actions would have.

The Muslim Commissioners, Justice Din Mohammad and Justice Mohammad Munir insisted upon the division of the Upper Bari Doab, with a view to assume control over the Ravi Canal head-works at Madhopur and encircle the district of Amritsar as well as cut off the fair weather track between Madhopur and Jammu.

The Radcliffe award was announced three days after the transfer of power. Expectedly Gurdaspur was included in the east Punjab. Pakistan raised a hue and cry on the decision of the Boundary Commission, though the accredited Muslim members of the Commission had committed themselves to accept the award.

The actual game plan of Pakistan, to grab the Muslim ruled States with the help of the Muslim rulers who were supported by the British and the Muslim majority States with their Muslim subjects, met with little success due to the powerful States people's movements which the Muslim League leaders as well as the British had left out of their reckoning. Pakistan secured the accession of all the princely States situated within the territories delimited for it, including the State of Kalat, of which the ruler was opposed to accede to Pakistan, with the help of the British. The congress rulers, exhibited little interest to secure Kalat, rightly for the military commitments the accession of Kalat, India would have entailed and secondly to convey to the Muslim League leaders, to

keep off from the princely States, situated within the territories, earmarked for the Dominion of India.

The Muslim League had however, dealt a serious blow to the Congress leaders, when it had persuaded the Nawab of Junagarh to accede to Pakistan, a Hindu majority State situated in the midst of Kathiawar States. The Muslim League leaders had also reached a secret understanding with the Nawab of Hyderabad to support him to remain out of India, till he was able to assume independence and align his state with Pakistan. The accession of Junagarh to Pakistan and the refusal of the Nawab of Hyderabad had stood in the way of Hari Singh, the ruler of Jammu and Kashmir to accede to India. He knew that in the fracas, which was bound to follow, his state would be used as a pawn by the British as well as the Muslim league leaders, a situation, in which he was unsure of support from the congress leaders. He was fearful of Mountbatten, whom the congress leaders had installed the Governor General of the Indian Dominion.

The Indian leaders failed to respond to the threat Pakistan posed to the Kathiawar States and instead of trying immediate counter- action against the Nawab of Junagarh, they feebly complained to Pakistan against the decision of the Nawab and proposed that the final disposition of the Junagarh State be determined by a reference to the people of the State. The bogey of referendum was actually raised by Mountbatten to enable him to execute his design; to divide the States on the basis of the partition.

The Congress leaders walked into the trap. Perhaps, unsure of the British reaction and unable to face Mountbatten, they did not dare take advantage of the people's wrath against the rulers of Junagarh and Hyderabad. In Hyderabad, feverish preparations were afoot to declare the independence of the State and a secret understanding had already been reached between the Nawab of Hyderabad and the League leaders, which assured the Nawab, the support of Pakistan for an independent Hyderabad. Contrary to the avowedly pro-Pakistan stand of the rulers of Junagarh and Hyderabad, Hari Singh maintained scrupulous silence on the issue of accession. Hari Singh told the Viceroy as well, and in plain terms, that he would take such a decision on the accession of the State as would be in the interests of his people. Indeed, Mountbatten denounced him for his indecision and accused him of stupidity in reacting to the situation in a way which the British did not approve. Hari Singh offered a standstill agreement to both the Dominions on 12 August 1947.

India had a claim to all the three States, mainly because of their geographical contiguity to the Indian Dominion and their strategic importance to its security and territorial integrity. Neither the partition nor Pakistan was a factor in this determination of the future of Junagarh and Hyderabad which were embedded in the heart of the Indian Dominion and Jammu and Kashmir, which formed the traditional frontier of India in the north.

The indecisiveness of the Congress leaders to act promptly in Junagarh had a far-reaching impact on the Kathiawar States. Some of the rulers warned the Government of India that its prestige in Kathiawar had been irreparably impaired by its inability to save Jamnagar and the two smaller States of Babriawad and Mangrol. The warning administered a jolt to the Indian leaders. Mountbatten Laughed in his sleeves, for he realised that Pakistan had assumed the initiative in using Junagarh as a pawn for a bargain on Jammu and Kashmir as well as Hyderabad. Pakistan followed the course Mountbatten had visualized. Acceptance of a plebiscite would, in effect mean the

deferment of the accession of Hyderabad and Jammu and Kashmir and the continuation of the status-quo in Junagarh indefinitely, for how would the proposed plebiscite be conducted and by whom, more specially in a situation when the Nawabs of Junagarh and Hyderabad, were under no obligation to accept an agreement between the two Dominions which impinged upon their rights.

The Indian leadership was broken into factions who were led by decrepit and small men, who had lost the courage to face the problems, the partition had created. Nehru put himself at the mercy of the Viceroy, who exhibited determination to tackle the problems of the partition, which Nehru himself, was hardly prepared to face. Gandhi had obsolete views on the States and had lost contact with the stupendous developments, which rocked the Princely India.

Inside the Congress, the debate on the viability or otherwise of non-violence and non-intervention, immobilized whatever initiative India still possessed to retrieve the situation in the States of Junagarh, Hyderabad and Jammu and Kashmir, which were still outside the fold of the Indian Dominion. For India, the question of the Princely States was crucial, after the Muslim majority provinces and regions of the British India had seceded to form a separate Muslim State.

The further separation of the States into a third confederacy, Jinnah had visualized, was bound to balkanize India sooner or later. Junagarh with a long sea-coast, which provided it access to Pakistan, posed a grave threat to whole Kathiawar peninsula Hyderabad was in the heart of India, and was boiling in internal distrust, which had dangerous portent for the country in the south. Jammu and Kashmir formed a part of the warm Himalayan hinterland, and if it was lost to Pakistan, the whole of the Indian frontier in the north, would suddenly disintegrate. The Jammu and Kashmir State was crucial to the existence of India and not Pakistan, the one basic fact, the Indian leadership failed to emphasize.

After the transfer of power in India, the Dominion Government of India extended the time for accession, to the two States of Jammu and Kashmir and Hyderabad, which had offered a standstill agreement, to continue the relationship already subsisting between the States and the British India. The standstill agreement was of the same standard pattern, which the State Department of India had evolved for all the States. The standstill agreements, it needs to be noted, had no political implications and were restricted to the continuation of arrangements, which had governed the relation between the Princely States and the British Government of India.

While Pakistan kept the fire hanging in Junagarh, it prepared fast to deliver another stunning blow to India. On 21 October 1947, hardly fourteen days after Pakistan had sternly warned India against any intervention in Junagarh. It launched a massive invasion of the Jammu and Kashmir State. Thousands of armed tribesmen and irregulars, led by the crack Tochi Scouts, easily identified by their brown tunics, stormed into the State, with the twin objective of occupying the Kashmir Valley and attacking Jammu from across the Sialkot border to cut off the only communication line connecting the State with Madhopur in the Punjab, which the State Government had ordered to be repaired into a more serviceable highway for communication with India. Even at that time, Pakistan claimed that the invading forces were the Muslim subjects of the State, who had risen in revolt against the Dogra rule and the Afridi and the other tribesmen had only joined their brethren in the war of their liberation.

Junagarh was already in Pakistan. The Nawab of Hyderabad was eagerly waiting for the crucial movement to sneak into its protectorate. The Tochi troops and the Afridi tribesmen, who had delivered a blitzkrieg attack on Jammu and Kashmir, were close to their military objectives. After Jammu and Kashmir was reduced, Pakistan could negotiate a settlement on Junagarh and Hyderabad from a position of strength. M.A. Jinnah had forestalled Mountbatten in his bid to divide the States on the basis of the partition. No one in Pakistan, not even the Governor-General of that Country had any intention to invoke partition as a basis for any settlement of the Princely States, including Jammu and Kashmir.

Hari Singh upturned the whole game-plan of Pakistan. He offered accession to India, while the invading armies of Pakistan were fast converging on the capital city of Srinagar. The Government of India, which had received the reports of the invasion in the morning of 22 October 1947, took five long days to accept the accession of the state and send military help to Kashmir to save it from the invading forces poised to launch the final assault on the State capital. Mountbatten opposed an expeditious military decision, mainly to delay the deployment of the Indian troops in the state and allow Pakistan to complete the occupation of, at least, the Kashmir Valley and the frontier of Battistau and Ladakh. The Indian leaders allowed precious time to pass by in squabbles among themselves and with Hari Singh on how the authority of the government would be transferred to the National Conference, which opposed the accession of the State to Pakistan and exercised powerful influence among the Kashmir-speaking Muslims in the State. Together with the Hindus and the other minorities, a million in number, the Kashmir-speaking Muslims in the state. Together with the Hindus and the other minorities a million number, the Kashmir-speaking Muslims constituted almost the two thirds of the population of the State.

While V. P. Menon, The Secretary of the state in Department of the Government of India, ran back and forth from Srinagar to Delhi to finalise a settlement with Hari Singh, the real battle for the State was fought by the troops of the State army. Already depleted by the desertion of its Muslim ranks, the state army offered dogged resistance to the invading hordes at held them at bay till their last hour, earning moments of reprieve for Menon as well as the Maharaja Brigadier Rajinder Singh, the commander of the state army and his valiant men laid down their lives in the battle but cut off the advance of the enemy till 25 October 1947. The invaders entered Baramullah, the next day and settled down to regroup for their final assault on Srinagar. On the morning of 27 October 1947, airborne Indian troops arrived in Srinagar. Few men of the Indian soldiers of the First Sikh, who went into action that day, returned home.

The Indian Government threw away the initiative, the accession of the State had earned it, when it offered to refer the accession of the state to its people, a principle which the Indian leaders had been forced to abandon by the British as well as the Muslim League.

The lapse of the British Paramountcy and the right of the Princes to determine the disposition of their states was a precedent condition which the British and the Muslim League had recognised as a part of the transfer of power in the states. The Congress leaders, unnerved by Hyderabad and Junagarh sought to build a balance between Jammu and Kashmir on the one side and Hyderabad and Junagarh on the other, a policy inspired by Mountbatten, which ultimately proved disastrous for India.

While the Indian armies were fighting back the invasion, the Government of India committed another blunder and invoked United Nations intervention to end the aggression committed by Pakistan against Jammu and Kashmir, little realising that United Nations intervention would involve the internationalisation of not only Kashmir, but Hyderabad and Junagarh as well. The British pulled the strings from behind the curtain. Jammu and Kashmir was strategically important for the defense of their interests and the interests of their western allies, because the steady advance of the communists in China confronted them with a new danger, which a combine of the communist regimes in Asia posed.

In the Security Council, India found itself face to face with a world in which the sense of self-righteousness with which Gopalaswami Aiyangar pleaded the Indian case, had little credibility. Pakistan triumphed and the Security Council foisted a resolution on India which envisaged a plebiscite to determine the final disposition of Jammu and Kashmir. In January 1949, a cease-fire agreement was concluded between India and Pakistan. Almost half of the State was left under the occupation of the enemy.