

PRINT, POLITICS AND THE PRINCELY STATE OF JAMMU AND KASHMIR (1935 - 1940)

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In the late 1930s, publication of newspapers represented an important political distinction which aimed to create a space for mobilising political support in the princely state of Jammu and Kashmir. This article seeks to explore the ways in which the newspaper, an illustrated weekly, *Hamdard*, shaped the nationalist discourse from 1935 to 1940. By using the text material of *Hamdard* as a source, this article intends to show that the forerunners of the newspaper led a nationalist movement based on territorial definition to evoke a place-based imagination. Further, this article tries to enumerate certain facts which led to the failure of this nationalist movement to achieve its broader political goal of political independence during 1947.

There was already a prohibition on forming associations, and a ban on press was imposed during the 1930s in the princely state of Jammu and Kashmir (hereafter, PJK). This difficulty was aggravated with the complex ways in which politics and religion were coming to mean one and the same thing, and with the growing schism between the Hindus and the Muslims. The difficulty at the time was to find common ground between different communities (religious, regional and linguistic) to organise the people's movement for freedom from the Dogra monarchy. Attempts to start newspapers and journals in the state had begun by 1921. It was in this year that Lala Mulk Raj Saraf, born in 1894 at Samba Jammu region and graduated from Punjab University Lahore, made attempts to start a newspaper. After much difficulty, it was only in 1924, in his fourth attempt, that the sovereign gave him permission to start a newspaper which was called *The Ranbir*.¹ Saraf managed to run it for seven years—perhaps the only newspaper of the time that ran for so long—until Maharaja Hari Singh issued an order in May 1930 to stop its publication (Bazaz, 2002: 354).²

In the early 1930s, in order to overcome the obstacle of the non-

existence of free expression, news items and articles were sent outside the state, to Lahore, for publication. Sheikh Muhammad Abdullah, a young political activist, newly returned from Aligarh Muslim University after obtaining his masters in science in the 1930s, and later a prominent political personality in Kashmir politics, mentions in his autobiography how the news reported from Kashmir was typed at Srinagar and sent to someone called Abdul Majeed Qarshi in Jammu for translation into English. These reports were then sent to Maulana Rasul Mehar and Abdul Majid Saliq, owners of the *Daily Inquilab*, in Lahore for publication (Abdullah, 2008: 40). Two dailies from Lahore, *Siyasat* and *Muslim Outlook*, including pamphlets, which contained forceful condemnation of the authorities and scurrilous attacks on the Dogra ruler, were banned entry into the state by the Maharaja. This was followed by *Kashmiri Musalman*, the *Kashmiri Mazlum* and the *Maktub-i-Kashmir* (Bazaz, 2002: 116-7). The way in which these newspapers carried news about PJK created strong opinion against the Dogra rulers. Prem Nath Bazaz, a prominent journalist and one of the most articulate supporters for the freedom struggle of Kashmir which began in 1931, argued that in order to restrict outside interference in the political involvement and opinion-building in the state, it was necessary to start the newspapers from within the state. P. N. Bazaz wrote

In the killing of 21 persons by the police on 13 July, 1931, almost all the officials being Hindus and the Maharaja a Hindu and the 21 persons killed all Muslims, *the public opinion among the Muslims had by the time crystallized on the point that the government and the Hindu community was inseparable and that one stood for the other* (Bazaz, 2002: 130).³

However, the Hindu community was also beginning to be maligned in the news reports and seen in tandem with the power. With the passing of 'Press Law', the Glancy Commission⁴—set up under the British official, Sir Glancy, which passed recommendations in the state to redress communal grievances—included the removal of ban on the publication of newspapers and journals in the state.⁵ More than a 100 papers had started since May 1932, and most of them had very brief life-spans. A number of journals and newspapers continued in different parts of the State. There were four Urdu Weeklies, *Hamdard*, *Ranbir*, *Desh* and *Chand*. Others included *Islah*, *Amar*, *Khalid*, *Sudarshan Vakil*, *Pasban*, *Albarq* and the *Rahbar*. The English Weekly was *Kashmir Times* and the only daily in the state was *Martand* (Bazaz, 2002:357). The Press was divided into two classes: the press conducted and edited by the Muslims and by the Hindus and until

1935, as a rule, no Hindu paper had a Muslim on its editorial staff and no Muslim journal, a Hindu editor (Ibid: 358).

After many failed attempts, finally in 1935, the Governor and District Magistrate of Kashmir authenticated Pandit Prem Nath Bazaz to print and publish the Weekly *Hamdard*, (hereafter, WH) in conformity with the provisions of the 'Press and Publications Regulations'.⁶ WH had the distinction of having Mr. S. N. Koul and Maulvi Mohamad Said as the editors and Mr. S. M. Abdullah and Mr. P. N. Bazaz, as the proprietors and publishers. This policy of the paper focused on working irrespective of the religious differences. Before the publication of WH, public notices were issued by the publishers stating their aims:

Despite last four years' political and sectarian conflicts in the state, there are people who sincerely desire Hindu-Muslim unity and an end to sectarianism. They are ready to offer their services in the way of *Nashnalezam*, and consider '*Hamdard*' initiating the *Sahee Qavumi Zindagee* in Kashmir... Nevertheless, there are individuals in this *Mulk* who anticipate their annihilation in both Hindu-Muslim unity and adherence to *Nashnalezam* and make attempts to dissuade people from *Qaum Parastee*... In the interests of our *Hum Watan*, this sincere appeal calls for the support of masses, to hold back any opinions until the publication of *Hamdard* for it is mere prejudice to label it a conspiracy or an attempt to mislead the people (P. N. Bazaz, Unpublished Private Papers).⁷

As is evident from the quote, WH's commitment was to unite people and direct the movement for freedom, which began in 1931, along the lines of *qaum-parastee* and *nashnalizm* (nationalism). Terms such as nationalism, secularism, nation, and people were used interchangeably with equivalences like *watan*, *watan-parast*, *qaum-parastee*, *qaum*, *mulk*, *hum-watan*, *bashindgaan-e-watan*, etc. In a 'Public Notice' issued by Sheikh Muhammad Abdullah, he stated the aims and objectives of WH as:

An illustrated weekly '*Hamdard*' will be published soon, the objective of which is to initiate a movement for *qaum-parasti* to ensure the safeguard of rights of all sects and classes belonging to this *mulk*... The sacrifices made so far in the struggle for freedom has awakened our *qaum* and secured for us the freedom for Press, forming Associations and the State Legislative Assembly following the Glancy Commission recommendations... The struggle for freedom is a long and a difficult one... At the outset it is important to evoke unfaltering love for our *watan* and to build trust among different communities and sects in this *mulk*... The obligation of the majority is to gain confidence of the minorities; otherwise the struggle for freedom would be most difficult.

Mr. Prem Nath Bazaz, my *hum-watan* and brethren is accompanying me in this noble mission that shall lead our *qaum* and *mulk* into political, constitutional and economical independence. I am also hopeful about the generous contributions from people toward the Movement and to make *Hamdard* a success (Ibid).⁸

These notices clearly stated the aim to lead the freedom movement and chart out its future direction rather than a mere pursuit of profit, as the purpose of newspapers may appear. WH did not enjoy any official and government support or patronage. It partly financed itself through advertisements but the initial money came from community contributions and donations.⁹ The aim of publishing WH was to reject communal schism; to bring Hindus and Muslims together and lay down the vision for the political freedom of Kashmir. This *nashnalizm* as a political ideology was ground breaking because it was stated that secular principles and national ethos were to guide and govern the freedom struggle.

From the beginning, WH retained a certain format. It contained 20 pages, out of which two were reserved for illustrations. Its lucidly written and well-illustrated articles covered topics ranging from scientific inventions, geographical exploration, trans-regional and trans-national exchanges, animal world, amazing facts in the world, palmistry to language issues, political movements in other princely states in India and the World War. The paper provided extensive coverage of world affairs, with pictures. It brought together news on the politics and fiction of its time. Stories and articles too, were illustrated with pictures and sketches. It carried biographies, travelogues; informative articles related to science, history, geography, sports, and politics. The section on fiction included poetry, short stories and parables, many of which were illustrated. From time to time notices were issued in the paper, inviting contributions for stories, poems and articles for publication in WH (WH, 1938:15).

The paper included columns on education systems, political models, book reviews, letters to the editors and cinema. News from India was collated with news from the world. News from Jammu and Kashmir included the weekly summary of events in the provinces of Jammu and Kashmir. There was one regular feature on the political party, All Jammu and Kashmir Muslim Conference (hereafter AJKMC) covering debates/commentaries on the political discourse of PJK. The local section of the journal provided intimate details about the everyday life in Srinagar and Jammu. 'Film Nagar' regularly featured news on international cinema, cinema in India and the films that were screened at local cinema theatres in Kashmir.

Through the commercials, like *Carter's Little Liver Pills*, *ENO fruit salts*, *Himalaya Soaps*, *Cuticura Ointment and Soap*, *Zambuk Ointment*, *Grimault's syrup*, *Kolynos dental cream*, *Phenalgin*, *Optrex Eye solution*, *Oriental Life Insurance Policies*, *Listerine Tooth paste*, *Everyday Flash lights*, *The Kashmir Match Factory*, *Popular Workshop for repairing*, *Badshah Hair Dye*, *Rose Soap*, *4711 Fairness Cream*, *Dunlop safety tyres*, and many more, people were not only exposed to the products and brands alone, but attracted by the visuals accompanying the commercials. The paper covered a wide array of events, book reviews¹⁰, cultural events, including public lectures and activities of local civic associations (WH, 1938: 10).¹¹

The letters to editors created a dialogic relationship with readers and opened a feed-back loop, therefore extending connectivity between various voices and intensifying the nature of political debates. A wider public approval and enthusiastic responses from readers is evident from the letters written to the editors published in every issue. This was of great significance, giving a kind of 'material evidence' of the existence of readers, thereby creating a new form of relationship between the readers, writers and the political leaders (WH, 1938:12).¹²

On Language

In her paper *Colonial Bilingualism*, Veena Naregal (1999) argues as to how, in the late nineteenth and early twentieth century, in the context of Western India, the initiative to establish newspapers represented an important domain for defining 'modern literate communities' in colonial India. This argument draws 'Colonial Divide' as a simple binary between the English language and the vernacular realm. In PJK, the colonial linguistic divide did not conform to generic relationship between high languages (Persian) and the vernacular realm (Kashmiri). The proposal to start WH stated that:

The paper shall be printed and published in Vernacular in the beginning, as the vast literate majority of the people inhabiting the villages know Urdu language only. After a few months when this Vernacular Paper is organized and well on its way, an English edition of the same which will mostly fulfill the needs of the English knowing public living in the cities and the large towns may also be published side by side with it... and owing to the fact that pictures add immensely to the charm of a Weekly Journal it is proposed that two pages of the Vernacular weekly should be reserved for illustrations of local as well as outside interest¹³ (Unpublished Private Papers)

By proposing to publish the paper in the vernacular (that is Urdu) and English, the forerunners of WH attempt to draw the linguistic divide and conceived of two virtually discrete spaces of public: the city and the rural. WH was initiated with an aim to serve the urban literate in English language and the rural population in Urdu language, which was identified to be the vernacular. However, this could not be accomplished because the newspaper was printed and published in 1935 only in the Urdu language. The paper published in Urdu reached the ‘vast literate majority of the people inhabiting the villages’ as well as the city, just as it had aimed. Urdu language served, and sufficed, as the medium for both the rural and urban public. Unable to bring out the English equivalent, the paper’s policy, it seems, was not to foreground the linguistic hierarchy as argued in case of western India by Veena Naregal. For the publishers of WH, to bring out the newspaper with its stated aims and objectives within the state and its dissemination within the state was far more important. The urgency was to counter the communal schism within the state and to discourage political interference and influences from outside the state premised largely on religious affiliations.¹⁴ WH took upon the task to reach the wider audience across the tough geographical terrain—Baramullah, Handwara, Islamabad, Budgam, Shopian, Poonch, Mirpur, Kotli, Rajouri, Kathua, Ranbirpora, Keran, Teetwaal, Kehwri, Muzaffarabad, Sopore, Skardu—to reach to the people, to popularise and organise the nationalist movement in PJK against the Dogra monarchy. Within such a highly multilingual state, language-based nationalism was not adopted to drive the nationalist movement. For the forerunners of WH, the relationship between individuals as part of a much larger group could not be created through a language. The establishment of the princely state of Jammu and Kashmir in 1846¹⁵, with the Dogra Maharajas as the sovereign, did not simply stitch together the rough geographical terrains. Rather, it interlocked multi-ethnic and multi-lingual regions to create a ‘safer frontier’ against Russia and Afghanistan for the British India by creating a princely state. Subsequently, within the linguistic diversity, Urdu was instituted as a ‘link-language’ by the British and eventually got introduced in the administration for official purposes and later for education (Census of India 1921, Vol: XXII, Part-I: Ch. X).¹⁶

During the reign of the first Dogra ruler, Maharaja Gulab Singh, between 1846 and 1857, and his successor Maharaja Ranbir Singh, who ruled between 1857 and 1885, Persian held the status of official language. Ranbir Singh’s rule saw several other languages

such as Sanskrit, Dogri and Hindi enjoying literary prestige and official patronage. He attempted to revive the study of Sanskrit and founded *Patshalas* (schools) where Sanskrit was taught. He also set up a translation bureau for translating Sanskrit texts into Persian, Hindi and Dogri.¹⁷ Further, Hindi in Devnagari script became one of the official languages of the state and a fortnightly Hindi Gazette entitled '*Ranbir Samachar*' was started.¹⁸ However, during the rule of Maharaja Pratap Singh (1885-1925) in 1889¹⁹, with the constitution of the State Council,²⁰ the first order was issued to change the language of the court from Persian to Urdu.²¹

Pratap Singh was asked to refrain from all interference in the administration²² and deprived of all authority until 1905, when the power was finally restored to him. During the rule of the last Dogra Maharaja Hari Singh, who ruled between 1925 and 1947, the then Director of Education, K. G. Sayyadin, declared 'easy Urdu'/'simple Urdu' in both Persian and Devnagari characters as the official medium of instruction in the schools.²³

In the 1921 Census of India, it was stated that,

It is difficult to give the Status of *Lingua Franca* to any of the languages spoken in the State, *but Punjabi and Urdu are understood by intelligent people in all parts of the State.* Punjabi is generally used by the Punjabi traders and businessmen, who are found in large numbers in all important towns of Kashmir and even in the Frontier Districts.²⁴

Urdu was accorded official status of state language which the publishers of WH interchangeably used as the vernacular. The British administration was interested in facilitate trade through the state and encouraged Punjabi traders to do business in the state. By imposing Urdu as the official language which could be understood easily by the traders, the linguistic diversity was dismissed by the British along with the possibility of identifying with the language. Moreover, the debates around *Hindustani* since 1800²⁵ in British India did not seem to have any significant influence on this linguistic shift in PJK.²⁶

The status of languages appeared enormously diverse and complicated in PJK and presented a difficulty in according the status of *Lingua Franca* to any one of the languages of the state for the British. In order to avoid the difficulty of linguistic diversity, the forerunners of WH turned to Urdu as the language assumed to be understood by the masses. Previously, when Persian was the official language, different linguistic groups maintained different spoken languages (eg., Dogri, Pahari, Pashtu, Kohistani, Dardi, Tibetan, Ladakhi and Kashmiri to name a few) for generations. Urdu came

much later than these languages. The textual practices and literary tasks were accomplished in several written/spoken like Arabic, Persian, Sanskrit, English, Hindi and Kashmiri (written both in Perso-Arabic/Devnagari scripts). In 1936, a Professor of English and Principal of S.P. College in Srinagar added Kashmiri section to the college magazine *Pratap* of Sri Pratap Singh College. This practice was followed in another magazine *Lalla Rookh* of Amar Singh College. Both the magazines contained articles in English, Punjabi, Urdu, Persian, Hindi and Kashmiri (in both Devnagari and Perso-Arabic scripts).²⁷ Although the role of Urdu expanded because of its use for administrative purposes; this heteroglossia could not be undermined.

The polyglot, pluralistic nature posed difficulty for the nationalists such as Bazaz and Sheikh Abdullah to connect and unify people by imposing a language-based nationalism. There was no instance of intimacy between the Urdu language and people in PJK. Urdu could not be considered as a marker of identity of any particular religious or regional community within the state. For Bazaz and Abdullah, if Urdu (*vernacular*) served to be the language of resistance against the monarch in print form, how must one understand much stronger resistance in Kashmiri poetic expressions, since the period saw unparalleled growth of Kashmiri poetry with nationalist and revolutionary zeal?²⁸ In the nationalism, which WH promoted, language was not a site of imagined identification and emotional attachment.

Nationalism and Expansion of Political Space

In WH, the freedom struggle in late 1930s in PJK was increasingly distinguished as a nationalist movement and advanced from redress of communal grievances to the larger movement for freedom. In its editorials, it strongly called for support for the safeguard of *watan* and *mulk* not only against the oppressor, the Dogra ruler, but also against the outsiders, who did not belong to Jammu and Kashmir. The sense of belonging was understood and mediated through the relationship between nation (*watan*) and people (*hum-watan*); between the *mulk* and *bashindgaane-e-mulk*. This vocabulary of belonging with *watan/mulk/qaum* evoked a sense of collective. And the deployment of nationalism by the forerunners of WH created a space constitutive of nation, people, brethren (*hum-watan, watan-parast, qaum-parast, baashindgaan-e-watan, baradaran-e-qaum*) as opposed to the 'princely state' and 'subjects' of the Dogra monarch.

The nationalist party which aimed for the overthrow of the Dogra monarch, aimed to connect geographical regions of PJK and unify people under one unanimous political discourse. It was held by a strong commitment towards the integration of different regions; need to maintain link roads, such as the Mughal Road, to ensure connectivity between important towns and places²⁹ in order to gather mass support for 'All Jammu and Kashmir Muslim Conference'³⁰ (hereafter AJKMC).

The growing frequency of the political tours associated with 1938 election campaigns of S. M. Abdullah along with other members, representing AJKMC, along with the expansion of readership of WH, became instrumental in mobilising mass support for the political party and freedom movement beyond the valley of Kashmir.

On 14 April 1938, S.M. Abdullah travelled to Baramullah and Sopore. On 15th April he went to Handwara. On 16th April he went to Aesh-Muqaam in district Islamabad. On 17th April he went to Budgam, on 18th and 19th April he went around Srinagar city. On 22nd April S.M. Abdullah went to Shopian, On 25th April he travelled from Kashmir to Jammu; wherefrom he travelled to Poonch, Mirpur, Kotli, Rajouri, Kathua, Ranbirpora and via Keran to Teetwaal, Kehwri, Muzaffarabad, Sopore, Baramulla and other places in connection with election campaign delivering speeches and addressing the people to support All Jammu and Kashmir Muslim Conference.³¹

The political tours undertaken by S.M. Abdullah as the President of the Party, especially during the election campaign, turned out to be one of the major landmarks in the political history of PJK. What becomes noteworthy is the travel network across the geographical space, aiming to connect and unify under the umbrella politics of AJKMC. With this, PJK was not only imagined to be a single geographical and political entity, but it also ensured for S.M. Abdullah mass support in the 1940s. P. N. Bazaz writes:

By far the most important of all the Conference leaders is Sheikh Mohammad Abdullah, the man who has been the chief hero of the Kashmir movement and has been primarily responsible for the politics of the State during several years in the past...No one in the history has enjoyed so much popularity with the masses as he... Much of the immediate future of Kashmir politics depends on what attitude Sheikh Abdullah adopts (Bazaz, 2002: 344;348).

After the success of AJKMC in the Assembly Elections of the State in 1938, the two most important issues that came up were, firstly, to decide upon the future direction of the freedom struggle

and secondly, the change of nomenclature of AJKMC. These two questions occupied much of the discursive space in WH since March 1938 issues.

After the success of 1938 elections, it has become evident that people are convinced about supporting the Organisation as opposed to individual candidates. All Jammu and Kashmir Muslim Conference which won 19 out of 21 seats (since candidates could not be nominated from the remaining two Constituencies) has emerged as the largest political organisation in the state which enjoys mass support. The Pandit community despite having 'political insight' and 'high literacy' show not only lack of political commitment but leadership as well, in not adhering to *Qaum Parasti*. To redeem Hindus in Jammu from deplorable conditions the need is to guide them toward *Qaum Parasti* (Nationalism) and the six lakh Hindus be brought closer to the Muslims in Jammu. It is necessary to give up the '*gau mata ki ja'*' slogan and replace it with 'Jammu-Kashmir *Zindabaad*'.³²

In 1932 B.J. Glancy who presided over the Kashmir Constitutional Reform Conference introduced separate electorates³³ for the Hindus and the Muslims in the state that created barriers for the AJKMC to overcome religious divide and rally mass support. For many, the nomenclature AJKMC emphasised religious bigotry and turned out to be a source of contestation in terms of secular affiliation within the party. S.M. Abdullah in his presidential address strongly advocated the need for inclusion of Hindus and Sikhs of the country (*mulk*) who demanded 'Responsible Government' in the state.

The politics of the *mulk* needs to be maneuvered along *qaum parasti*. There is a great difficulty in achieving the Responsible Government in the state, largely due to: a) thinking in terms of Muslim and non-Muslim; while discussing our political goals and b) the growing strength of capitalist class in the State. All Jammu and Kashmir Muslim Conference succeeded in winning all the Muslim seats in the elections of 1938 and intends to nominate candidates for the non-Muslim constituencies in the forth coming elections for which the two need to join hands possibly by allowing more and more non-Muslims to come into the fold of the Conference.³⁴

The discussions in WH after 1938 were increasingly preoccupied with the change of the nomenclature of AJKMC, opinions on which were featured on *page 5* of every issue. These debates started appearing from March 9, 1938 and continued until June 1938. The headlines were representative. For instance, 'An Important Question for the Muslim Conference: Need for a National Conference'³⁵; 'Open the doors of Muslim Conference to Non-Muslims'³⁶; 'An

Important Question for Muslim Conference: Prior to the Struggle for Responsible Government'³⁷; 'Muslim Conference Or National Conference: Need for consideration'³⁸; 'The Change of the Muslim Conference into National Conference: An Overview of the Historical Moment'.³⁹

Several people expressed their opinions on these debates, as well. Bazaz came up with 'Political Meditation and Far-Sightedness'. The Tribune wrote, 'Nothing can come in Their Way'. The Kashmir Times remarked that it was 'Time for the Common Struggle'. Sardar Budh Singh wrote, 'Hope for Mutual Trust'.⁴⁰ After many debates and discussions, AJKMC finally became National Conference (NC) in June, 1938. It was supposed to herald a historical moment in the political and cultural history of PJK.⁴¹ It was believed that NC emerged as the sole democratic and secular party in the state. However, the group which segregated from the earlier party got organised under the Muslim Conference (MC) in the state, under the leadership of Maulvi Yusuf Shah, the *Mirwaiz* (Chief Clergy) of Kashmir during 1930s and 1940s.

It would be difficult to understand the nature of territorial nationalism which WH tried to gather support for, without defining the nature and process of state formation, pressing on the demarcation of the frontiers. In 1846, the raja of Jammu, Gulab Singh, was recognised by the British as Maharaja for settling the war indemnity levied on the defeated Sikhs in Anglo-Sikh War. On March 16, 1846, the British signed a treaty at Amritsar transferring to Gulab Singh, against the cash payment of 1, 75,000 rupees, "all the hilly or mountainous country with its dependencies situated to the eastward of the river Indus and the westward of the river Ravi"⁴². However, it did not include the eastern boundary of the tract over which Gulab Singh had "no authority to alter without concurrence of the British Government."⁴³

The PJK thus formed, corresponded to three main geographical divisions: Jammu province (granted to Dogra Gulab Singh by Ranjit Singh in 1822); the provinces of Ladakh and Baltistan (which were conquered for raja Gulab Singh by his general Zorawar Singh in 1834 and 1840 respectively) and; Kashmir province (which the British sold to Gulab Singh in 1846). Several attempts were made by the British to define Kashmir's frontiers distinctly to ensure safety at the frontiers. In 1848, when the British urged Maharaja Gulab Singh to strengthen his hold on Gilgat, subsequent campaigns against Chilas in 1851, Yasin in 1860 and 1863 and Hunza in 1865 brought the borders of the frontier land under the Maharaja's control (Keay, 1979: 5; 27).

By 1870s a more reliable system of guarding the frontier became crucial therefore the British instituted the Gilgit Agency in 1889 under the direct control of a British political agent and was leased to the British for sixty years in 1935 (Korbel, 1992: 13). Poonch was formally brought under the control of PJK in 1936 as a result of judicial settlement (Hussain, 2009: 2). The state was externally defined by the British with distinct frontiers and subjected internally to Dogra rule.

In the 1920s, a section of Kashmiri Hindus urged Maharaja Hari Singh to define 'State-Subject' against the growing dominance of Punjabi traders and state employees appointed from outside the state under British patronage. The 'State Subject' defined who belonged to the state or who could secure the status of the 'Subject of the State' in matters of state scholarships, state lands for agricultural and house building purposes and recruitment to state government offices.⁴⁴ Maharaja Hari Singh also issued a notice classifying 'State-Subjects' into four types. Thus, 'all persons born and residing within the state before the commencement of the reign of Gulab Singh and the persons who settled therein before the commencement of *Samvat* year 1942 and have been permanently residing were categorised as Class I subjects given preference over Class II, Class III and IV subjects defined respectively.⁴⁵ Another notification issued in 1932 determined 'the status of Jammu and Kashmir State-Subjects in foreign territories and laid rules for informing the governments of Foreign States as to the position of their nationals in the State'.⁴⁶

WH maintained a strong opinion against the continuing rule of outsiders, economic and other benefits availed by the non-Kashmiris, attacking the government policies and condemning the extensions approved. It especially criticised Diwan Bahadur N. Gopal Swami Ayengar, Hon'ble Prime Minister, Mr. Sir Abdul Samad, Hon'ble Home Minister, Sir Lal Gopal Mukherjee, Hon'ble Law and Revenue Minister, and Rai Bahadur Mr. Jagat Prasad. This was clearly seen as a gesture of irresponsible and corrupt government.⁴⁷ The WH's position was that the government was against Kashmiris since it patronised 'Non-Kashmiris' to invest in the state and provided support to the 'outsiders'.

By allowing the non state-subjects to invest in the State, Ayengar Ministry has shown their indifference and irresponsibility; whereas Mr. Zutshi, a non-resident Kashmiri having returned from London after ten years has been denied the permission to establish a cement factory in the state.⁴⁸

In yet another instance, the paper brought to the fore the Text-Book committee scandal involved in hiring 'non state-subject

publishers illegally from outside the state'.⁴⁹ It also featured debates on 'Domiciled Non-Kashmiri' and 'Non-State Residents' and expressed strong condemnation and resentment against the award of scholarship to non-Kashmiris.⁵⁰ The status of "state-subject" on one hand categorised people as 'legal-subjects' and classified them hierarchically, giving precedence to Class I over II, III and IV. On the other hand, growing emphasis on different types of subject-hood, that is, 'Domiciled Non-Kashmiri', 'Non State Resident', further classified the status of belonging as to who was an outsider or who belonged to the state, thus defining identity with territory. WH invoked this sense of belonging strongly and presupposed how the 'subjects-of-the-state' was related to the *watan* mediated not only by affect and emotion, but also legally, through these definitions.

Most often, scholars who have tried to explore the political motivations of PJK have explained it as 'larger influence from outside for political salvation'. This approach strait-jacketed Kashmir's struggle for freedom either along the Indian National Congress-, or Muslim League-, or British-induced link between ruler-religion-region, or Punjab-based organisations, the *Ahmadiyyas*, the *Majlis-i-Ahrar-i-Islam-i-Hind* of Lahore, or Right-wing Hindu militant politics (Zutshi, 2004:253-4; Rai, 2001:261; Copland,1981:231; Bazaz, 2002:109). Such views downplay peoples' agency in resisting oppression and contesting the authority. Moreover, they universalise the forms of resistance and responses of communities to oppression within a singular framework of understanding the freedom movement against colonial rule in British India (Pinto, 2007: *Introduction*).

The other political principalities and princely states which were not part of British India did not correspond to print patterns, linguistic policies or nationalist ideologies in the similar manner as in the British India.

The forerunners of WH aimed to forge a very distinct identity for PJK in the process of overthrowing monarchy. It would be indeed simplistic, as argued by Manu Bhagvan, to suggest that, "the British administrators invented princely states as religious backwaters out of necessity to serve as a contrast to Western progressivism" (Bhagavan, 2008: 890). In their nationalist movement for freedom, the demand for progressive, democratic and responsible government in PJK by the nationalists challenged the idea of Muslim majority states as a homogenous whole. Dr. B.S. Moonje, leader of the Hindu Mahasabha, and later one of the founding members of the Rashtriya Swayamsevak Sangh (RSS), in his address at the Baroda conference, declared:

‘I should like to warn my Hindu brethren. They should study and try to know what the real motive is which inspires Mussalmans in the Hyderabad State, on one side, to oppose introduction of democracy and Responsible Government, and the same Mussalmans in the Kashmir State, on the other to agitate for democracy and Responsible Government’ (quoted in Bhagavan, 2008: 890).

Although PJK comprised of majority Muslims, the political movement for freedom was distinct when compared to other princely states in India and the Muslim majority in Indian sub-continent. The difference becomes manifest from the following quote in *Hindu Outlook* which speaks of “consistently lambasting Hyderabad as a dangerous, backward state, bent on attacking its Hindu population; whereas *inversely* warning of Muslim doings against the state and culture of Kashmir” (Ibid, 891).⁵¹

WH ran over a span of four years, from 1935 to 1939. In the latter years, by 1938, it openly criticised the Dogra authority. In August 1938, the District Magistrate issued notices to Abdullah and Bazaz, warning them against using ‘treasonable language’ against His Highness Maharaja Hari Singh and making public speeches for the next six months. In response to the notices issued, both Bazaz and Abdullah refused to concur to the Government order. Bazaz wrote:

I denounce the orders of District Magistrate and the Notice that I received under Article 108-A of Indian Penal Code, which is an unruly law and worthless. It cannot deter me; neither from expressing my wish for freedom nor from addressing the people and I shall go ahead with my mission.⁵²

On July 31, 1938, WH brought out a special volume, ‘Responsible Government Number’, which was not allowed for circulation by the District Magistrate on account of certain ‘objectionable’ photographs. The District Magistrate also ordered the printer and publisher of WH and the owner of the press to deposit Rs. 1,500 and Rs. 750, as securities. Failing to abide by the order, and in connection with the agitation of September 1938, the proprietors, editors and some staff members of WH were imprisoned and the paper was closed down. The press was closed down from September 1938 to May 1939 (Bazaz, 2002: 366). It resumed operations in May 1939 after the District Magistrate ordered a sum of Rs. 3000/- to be deposited as security. WH served prelude to a series of important cultural and political initiatives, with which Bazaz and Abdullah remained closely associated, until 1941. However, in January 1941, Abdullah announced publicly to separate from WH. Thus, the two parted

politically and as companions. Bazaz became the sole proprietor of WH, which was then turned into a daily newspaper.⁵³

By this time, Abdullah had entered into a different phase in his political career. The life of Abdullah, and the later political discourse of Kashmir's freedom struggle in the 1940s, became synonymous with one another. Abdullah had acquired much popularity and mass support to exercise control and power that drove the future of the state's 1947 imbroglio.

Conclusion

Thus, the initiative of indigenous newspapers was largely responsible in creating strong political debates in the princely state of Jammu and Kashmir after 1930. Given the prevailing multi-lingual condition and the ambivalent political location between British colonialism and the Dogra monarchy, the newspapers sought to contest the legitimacy of the Dogra rule, and at the same time influenced the freedom struggle. The notion of inclusivity in the nationalist political discourse was imagined by being a part of territory. During the period, terms like *watan*, *mulk* territorially defined the nation and at no instance referred to a religio-political community. It is thus important to look at the territorial understanding of nationalism envisaging a kind of fusion between the 'people', 'nation' and 'territory'. In this complex interrelationship between different elements involved in the national construction of identity, the absence of nationalist claims over language put the movement on back-foot. For the publishers of WH, no singular language could become a means to model their nationalist movement. However, the absence of language-based nationalism and focus on the territorial dimension failed to consolidate the political response of the leaders and the people of the princely state of Jammu and Kashmir in 1947. Rather, it led to the challenging task of envisioning a future after partitioning of the territory.

Notes

1. Sofi, *Kashir*, Vol II, p. 818
2. *The Ranbir* covered in its special edition the proceedings of the procession taken out in Jammu on 7th May 1930 on the arrest of Mahatma Gandhi. It was ordered to stop the publication 'on the ground of interference in the affairs of British India and political demonstrations within his territory against the British Government.
3. Emphasis added.
4. To probe into killing of 21 persons by police on 13th July 1931 at Srinagar, Sir

Barjor Dalal, Chief Justice of Kashmir headed a commission was appointed on 14th July 1931 which submitted the report 'Dalal Committee Report' on 24th September, 1931 strongly condemned by the people and a copy of it burnt in Jammu. Maharaja Hari Singh called for Memorials on 5th October, 1931 for redress of any grievances and appointed of Commission of four non-official members Khawaja G. A. Ashai and Prem Nath Bazaz from Kashmir and Chaudhary Ghulam Abbas and Lok Nath Sharma from Jammu on 12th November, 1931, presided over by Sir B.J.Glancy (on Maharaja's request to the Foreign and Political Department of Government of India to lent the services of Sir Glancy). By March 1932, 'Glancy Commission' submitted a report with recommendations including establishing a Legislative Assembly with the powers to make Laws, restoring to the Muslims their religious buildings in possession of the Government, undertake educational development strenuously and to initiate effective measures for appointment to prevent neglect of the due interests of any community.

5. On the orders of Maharaja Hari Singh, Sir B.J.Glancy recommended 'Press Law' (analogous to the one prevailing in British India) promulgated in May 1932, regarding the modification of the then existing regulations related to matters such as the establishment of societies and associations and free expression of opinion either in public meetings or in the press.
 6. In a Memo Reference No.Jc/1002 dated Srinagar the 29th April 1935 written to Pandit Prem Nath Bazaz. Private Papers of P.N.Bazaz (Private Collection of Bushan Bazaz, New Delhi). Accessed on 23rd July, 2012 at their residence in Hauz Khas, New Delhi.
 7. Public Notice entitled '*Hum Watno ke Naam Dard Mandana Appeel*'. Private Papers of P. N. Bazaz (Private Collection of Bushan Bazaz, New Delhi). Accessed on 23rd July, 2012 at their residence in Hauz Khas, New Delhi.
- I have not translated words like *Qaumi Zindagee*, *Qaum*, *Qaum Parastee*, *Mulk*, *Hum-Watan*. '*Nashmalezam*' is written as such in Urdu, meaning 'Nationalism'. This becomes important to see the interchangeability between registers, constructs and concepts marking the import of concepts and meanings and implications of these in 'colloquial equivalences' such as *Qaum-Parastee*, *Watan-Parastee*. Cf. Dipesh Chakrabarty, *Habitations of Modernity* which implores how one might write about forms of modernity that have deviated from all canonical understandings of the term. 'While such categories are eminently translatable across societies and should, indeed, be so translated in the interest of social justice, they are also dogged by problems that arise from such acts of translation. This happens because societies come with their own plural histories that have already been imbibed by their members through certain shared dispositions, skills, competencies, and sentiments.' (All translations from Urdu into English are mine unless mentioned).
8. A notice issued by S. M. Abdullah dated 27th April 1935 made in the hope of donations. Private Papers of P. N. Bazaz (Private Collection of Bushan Bazaz, New Delhi). Accessed on 23rd July, 2012 at their residence in Hauz Khas, New Delhi.
 9. An Appeal made by S.M.Abdullah. Private Papers of P.N.Bazaz. (Private Collection of Bushan Bazaz, New Delhi). Accessed on 23rd July, 2012 at their residence in Hauz Khas, New Delhi.
 10. WH, Vol V, No. 24, 12-06-1938, p. 4, featured review of a book written in Urdu *Company ki Hakumat* (The Company Rule) which was published from Lahore.

The book, it was suggested, discussed in details ‘Black Hole of Calcutta’ and the life of Siraj-Ud-Daulla.

11. On the death of the poet, Allama Iqbal an obituary was published and condolence meetings held in S.P.S College, and other places in which students and teachers participated together and took out possessions.
12. WH, Vol V, No.12, 19-03-1938, p.12
13. ‘A Scheme for Starting an Illustrated Weekly Newspaper from Srinagar’, *Private Papers of P. N. Bazaz*. Accessed on 23rd July, 2012 at their residence in Hauz Khas, New Delhi.
14. For details see Copland, ‘Islam and Political Mobilization in Kashmir’.
15. Treaty concluded on 16th march 1846 between the local Raja of Jammu Gulab Singh and the British Government at Amritsar, known as Treaty of Amritsar.
16. On Kashmir, Languages. Report by Khan Bahadur Chaudhary Khushi Mohd, B.A. Srinagar State Archives (hereafter SSA).
17. Sufi, *Kashir*, Vol II, 1996:790.
18. Cited in the Gazetter, SSA . Also see Rai *Hindu Rulers Muslims Subjects*, especially p.196.
19. *Vide*. Circular no.3 of 10 Phagan S 1945 (1888 A.D.) in the Jammu province and in 1889 in Kashmir.
20. Pratap Singh had appointed a Council consisting of a President - the Maharaja with powers to appoint Vice-President, three-members and a Secretary. April 13, 1888 ‘Kashmir Legal Documents’ No. 17 (hereafter KLD). With the removal of Pratap Singh from power in 1889, the Government of India appointed a State Council consisting of Raja Ram Singh and Raja Amar Singh (Pratap Singh’s own brothers), an English member, Rai Bahadur Suraj Koul and Rai Bahadur Bhag Ram. ‘Constitution of the State Council 1889’, KLD No. 28.
21. Rai, 2001:243; Zutshi, 2004:176.
22. ‘Instructions from the Government of India to the Resident in Kashmir’, April 1, 1889, KLD No. 25. From the Resident in Kashmir to Raja Amar Singh, Prime Minister, Kashmir April 17, 1889. KLD No. 26.
23. ‘A Handbook of J&K State’, Jammu 1947, SSA.
24. Census of India 1921, Vol: XXII, Kashmir, Part-I Report: Chapter X, Languages, by Khan Bahadur Chaudhary Khushi Mohd, B.A. SSA.
25. For detailed discussion on the Hindi/Urdu controversy see Alok Rai, 2001.
26. Census Report 1911, p.164, SSA.
27. *Pratap* and *Lalla Rookh* two Annual College Magazines were brought out by Sri Pratap Singh College and Sri Amar Singh College, Srinagar
28. See Mehjoor’s ‘Come O Gardener’, ‘Freedom’; Azad’s ‘Revolution’, ‘The River’, ‘Change’, ‘O My Country Fellow Men’—the most popular poems. For details, see *Anthologies on Modern Kashmiri Poetry*. Also, Kalla, 1985. The literary forms such as *Baand* (folk-theatre), *Ladishah* (Comic-Satirical ballads) were the most popular forms of resistance during Gulab Singh’s period.
29. WH, Vol.V, No. 16, 17-04-1938:5.
30. For details on the formation of All Jammu and Muslim Conference in October 1932 see Ganai, 2007:104-14.
31. WH, Vol V, No. 16, 17-04-1938:12; Vol V, No. 17, 24-4-1938:10; Vol V, No. 22, 29-05-1938:10.
32. WH, Vol V, No. 24, 12-06-1938: 5.
33. In Constitutional Reform Conference in 1932 one of the important questions raised had been: whether electorates should be separate or joint...it was

maintained that...in the existing state of tension, the institution of joint electorates must be regarded as a dangerous experiment. Separate electorates are accordingly recommended. 'Report of the Kashmir Constitutional Reform Conference, 1932', KLD No 50.

34. WH, Vol V, No. 24, 12-06-1938: 6.
35. WH, Vol V, No. 12, 19-03-1938: 5.
36. Ibid:11.
37. WH, Vol V, No. 25, 19-06-1938: 5.
38. WH, Vol V, No. 26, 26-06-1938:5.
39. WH, Vol V, No. 27, 03-07-1938:18.
40. WH, Vol V, No. 14, 03-04-1938:14.
41. WH, Vol V, No.26, 26-06-1938:3; 5; 18; Vol V, No. 27, 03-07-1938:5;18.
42. Article I and II of the Treaty of Amritsar.
43. Articles IV of Treaty of Amritsar.
44. State Subject Definition Notification dated 20th April 1927. No. I-L/84. KLD No. 44.
45. No. I-L/84 sanctioned by His Highness (Vice Private Secretary's letter No. 2354, dated the 31st January, 1927 to the Revenue member of Council). KLD No. 44.
46. No. 13L/1989 (Issued by order of his Highness the Maharaja Bahadur dated Srinagar, the 27th June 1932), (14th *har*, 1989, Published in Government Gazette dated 24th *har*, 1989) KLD No. 44.
47. WH, Vol V, No. 10, 12-03-1938: 6.
48. WH, Vol V, No. 10, 12-03-1938:5.
49. Ibid.:6.
50. WH, Vol V, No. 23, 05-06-1938:14.
51. Emphasis Mine.
52. WH, Vol V, No. 34, 21-08-1938:7;9.
53. Notice dated 19-01-1941. Private Papers of P.N. Bazaz (Private Collection of Bushan Bazaz, New Delhi). Accessed on 23rd July, 2012 at their residence in Hauz Khas, New Delhi.

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