

## RECONSIDERATIONS

*Ramachandra Guba is a historian living in Bangalore. His books include Environmentalism: A Global History and A Corner of a Foreign Field: The Indian History of a British Sport. He writes the fortnightly "Past and Present" column for The Hindu of Chennai.*



### Opening a Window in Kashmir

*Ramachandra Guba*

We here recall a forgotten incident in the history of India-Pakistan relations, the visit of Sheikh Abdullah to Rawalpindi and Muzaffarabad in 1964. The story is of interest to the historian, and to the policymaker as well. Forty years on, the contours of the Kashmir dispute have scarcely changed. Now, as then, its solution must satisfy the conditions laid down in 1964 by Sheikh Abdullah: namely, that it must not lead to a sense of victory for either India or Pakistan; that it must make the minorities more secure in both countries; and that it must satisfy the aspirations of the people of Kashmir themselves.

—*The Editors*

#### I

The grandest residence in New Delhi is Rashtrapati Bhavan (formerly the Viceregal Lodge); the second grandest is Teen Murti House. Once occupied by the commander in chief of the British Indian Army, it became the home of the founding prime minister of free India, Jawaharlal Nehru. In the 16 years that Nehru lived there, many distinguished visitors stayed in Teen Murti House, not only heads of state but also writers, musicians, scientists, and artists.

Helping Nehru play host was his daughter, Indira Gandhi, and a well-trained staff. Of the hundreds of their guests perhaps the most special was the prominent Kashmiri who came in the summer of 1964. I suspect that his arrival made Nehru, and even Indira, rather more nervous than usual.

Other visitors were more celebrated, but no other visitor—at least no other male visitor—had such an intense, emotionally charged relationship with his host. Once a close friend of Nehru's, this guest had spent much of the past decade in an Indian prison, having been accused of plotting the breakup of the Indian union. Now he was free, and had come to visit the prime minister whose government had put him behind bars.

The visitor was Sheikh Abdullah, the Lion of Kashmir, among the most enigmatic figures of modern Indian history. He was at various times a student leader, peasant mobilizer, worker for interfaith harmony, and crusader for international peace. But this rebel had also held office. From 1947 to 1953, he ran the government of Jammu and Kashmir (as he would again from 1975 to 1982); ran it, it must be said, in less-than-democratic ways. He was both greatly loved and much derided; a hero to many Kashmiris, he was also defamed as an Indian agent by Pakistan, and as a Pakistani agent by India.

There is still no biography of a man who for half a century personified the "Kashmir problem." We know far too little about the key incidents in his political life, which crucially affected the history of Kashmir, and of India and Pakistan as well. This essay focuses upon one such forgotten incident, which unfolded during a few weeks in 1964. It is also of topical interest since India and Pakistan have commenced a "composite dialogue" on the matters that divide them: namely, trade, the movement of peo-

ple, and above all, Kashmir. The mood now recalls the halcyon summer of 1964, the last time India and Pakistan talked seriously about the prospects for peace in Kashmir.

## II

Born in 1905, the son of a shawl merchant, Sheikh Abdullah took a master's degree in science from the Aligarh Muslim University. Despite his qualifications, he was unable to find a government job in his native Kashmir. He became a schoolteacher and, soon enough, a political activist. In 1932, he was a mover behind the Jammu and Kashmir Muslim Conference, which aimed to challenge the rule of Maharaja Hari Singh, a Hindu who was excessively autocratic even by princely standards. Six years later, the sheikh changed the name of this organization to the National Conference, to make plain that it represented all Kashmiris, regardless of religion.

At six feet, four inches in height, Abdullah was an imposing presence. He was also a witty and compelling orator. And outspoken: in the 1930s and 1940s, he was frequently in and out of the maharaja's jails. In 1946, he called on the ruler to "Quit Kashmir," and was duly imprisoned on charges of sedition. From New Delhi, Jawaharlal Nehru, then leader of the Congress Party, rushed to his defense, only to be barred from even entering Kashmir by the maharaja's border officials.

Nehru had first met Abdullah in 1938. Despite the difference in age (Nehru was 16 years older) the two hit it off instantly. Both were charismatic and impulsive, both committed socialists who also despised chauvinism of all kinds. From the beginning, Nehru looked upon Abdullah as his man in Kashmir.

In August 1947, the British departed India, leaving behind two sovereign nations. Under the terms of partition, Kashmir's maharaja was given the authority to decide whether to join India or Pakistan, but initially he equivocated. That October, Muslim

tribal raiders entered Kashmir, hoping to galvanize support for Pakistan, but Maharaja Hari Singh instead chose accession to India. Wisely, he also released Sheikh Abdullah.

Abdullah and his followers played a crucial role in keeping the peace as the raiders were repulsed. His National Conference took the lead in promoting amity between Kashmir's religious communities in Srinagar. A journalist writing from the Kashmiri capital expressed the common view: "Hindus and Sikhs moved about with complete unselfconsciousness among Muslims who constitute the vast majority of the population of the town; they marched shoulder to shoulder with them down Srinagar's streets as volunteers engaged in a common task.... I could scarcely believe my eyes when I saw the miracle the Sheikh had wrought."<sup>1</sup> Another reporter was struck by the cordial relationship between the National Conference and the military, as characterized by the automobile drives conspicuously taken together by Sheikh Abdullah and the army's divisional commander, Major General Thimayya.<sup>2</sup>

Otherwise, the turbulence in 1947–48 implacably divided Kashmir. Its predominantly Muslim northern and western regions came under Pakistani control when a cease-fire line was demarcated. India retained control of the Hindu-dominated Jammu district, the high mountains of Ladakh, with its Buddhist peasants and pastoralists, and the Vale of Kashmir, often referred to simply as the Valley. Of all these regions, the Vale proved the most contentious. Under the logic of partition, it should have gone to Pakistan, since a majority of its population was Muslim. But these Muslims were in the main followers of Sheikh Abdullah, a secular politician who abhorred the idea of a theocratic state.

After the maharaja chose accession to India, Nehru asked him to turn over the administration of the state to Sheikh Abdullah. "He is obviously the leading popular

personality in Kashmir,” insisted Nehru. “The way he has risen to grapple with the crisis has shown the nature of the man. I have a high opinion of his integrity and general balance of mind. He has striven hard and succeeded very largely in keeping communal peace. He may make any number of mistakes in minor matters, but I think he is likely to be right in regard to major decisions.”<sup>3</sup> Shortly afterward, Abdullah took over as head of Kashmir’s administration. He stayed in that post from the end of 1947 until the middle of 1953. In view of the state’s special status under the Indian Constitution, he was called “prime minister,” rather than “chief minister.” In this period, he joined the Constituent Assembly of India and represented India at the United Nations. New Delhi needed the sheikh in the event that a U.N.-proposed plebiscite to determine Kashmir’s status was conducted. But Nehru apart, the Indian political establishment did not trust the sheikh, and he certainly did not trust it. He particularly worried about the strength of Hindu communal forces in India. So long as Nehru was in power these could be kept in check, but what might happen after his departure?

The sheikh feared that India would become a Hindu Pakistan, its polity and policies dominated by the wishes of its religious majority. But Abdullah at no stage contemplated joining Pakistan. Instead he weighed the merits of Kashmir carving out an independent existence, as a sort of Switzerland of the East. For that to happen he would need American support. This was not implausible, since Kashmir shared a frontier with Communist China and its borders were near those of the Soviet Union. In the Cold War, this mountain state could acquire strategic significance.

Abdullah broached the idea of an independent Kashmir in 1950 with Loy Henderson, then the U.S. ambassador to India. In 1953, he had extensive discussions with Adlai Stevenson, a heavyweight Democrat

who was visiting Kashmir. The content of these conversations was not disclosed, but Indians assumed independence was the subject. A Bombay journal known to be sympathetic to America reported that Stevenson had assured Abdullah of more than moral support. A loan of \$15 million could be available if Kashmir became sovereign; besides “the Valley would have a permanent population of at least 5,000 American families,” houseboats and hotels would be filled to capacity, Americans would buy the crafts output of dexterous Kashmiri artisans, and within three years every village in Kashmir would be electrified, “and so on and so forth.”<sup>4</sup>

Rumor had it that Abdullah would declare independence on August 21, 1953—the day of the great Id Festival, following which he would seek the protection of the United Nations against “Indian aggression.” New Delhi took this seriously enough to move preemptively. On August 8, Abdullah was deposed as prime minister and jailed. The coup was carried out with the complicity of his erstwhile deputy, Bakshi Ghulam Mohammed. The bakshi now assumed the post of prime minister, and a majority of Abdullah’s former cabinet colleagues chose to serve alongside him.<sup>5</sup>

### III

After Sheikh Abdullah was arrested, Jawaharlal Nehru stayed quiet, even as his government held the sheikh in detention without formal charges. But that Nehru felt deeply guilty is suggested by an extraordinary letter he sent to a party colleague in Rajasthan, asking him to look after Abdullah’s son, Farooq, then studying in a medical college in Jaipur.<sup>6</sup> As telling, he stayed away from his beloved Kashmir, where his own ancestors had lived, for four years after his friend’s arrest.

While Abdullah was detained, the state of Jammu and Kashmir was governed, almost brutally, by Bakshi Ghulam Mohammed. Elections were blatantly rigged,

dissent was crushed. So rife was nepotism and corruption that the state's government came to be known as "the BBC," the Bakshi Brothers Corporation.

No formal charges were brought against Abdullah, and in January 1958 he was released. He was greeted by rapturous public meetings in Srinagar, including one at the Hazratbal mosque, famous in the Islamic world for its sacred relic, a hair from the Prophet. His reception evidently alarmed the state government, and in April he was arrested once more. Now he was charged with conspiring with Pakistan to break up India. In formal legalese, he was accused of attempting "to facilitate wrongful annexation of the territories of the State by Pakistan; create communal ill-feeling and disharmony in the state and receive secret aid from Pakistan in the shape of money, bombs, etc."<sup>7</sup>

The charges were, to put it mildly, absurd. Although the sheikh contemplated independence for Kashmir, he never sought to join Pakistan. Very probably the idea of being the uncrowned king of a free Kashmir appealed to him, but he viewed all the people of the state, regardless of religion, as his subjects. Even his political opponents acknowledged that he did not have a communal bone in his body.

As the sheikh was subjected to a somewhat farcical trial, conditions in Kashmir deteriorated. In elections held in 1962, Bakshi Ghulam Mohammed fraudulently "disqualified" the candidacy of opposition politicians. This was too much even for an indulgent New Delhi. The central government deposed the bakshi as prime minister, replacing him with a man simply called Shamsuddin, commonly regarded as a puppet of his predecessor.

These were the circumstances on December 27 when a fresh crisis developed: the theft from the Hazratbal mosque of the hair of the Prophet. For weeks, there were demonstrations in the Valley that reverberated throughout the Islamic world. In East

Pakistan rioters harassed the minority Hindu community, of whom hundreds of thousands fled to India. A week after it had mysteriously vanished, the relic as mysteriously reappeared in the mosque. No one knew how or why it was returned, but respected clerics testified that it was the real article. Calm returned to the Valley. The better to prolong that peace, New Delhi replaced Shamsuddin with G. M. Sadiq, a Kashmiri known for his left-wing views, but also for his integrity.

During this time, Sheikh Abdullah could only watch events from his cell. Meanwhile, these were also troubling times for his friend Nehru. The prime minister was badly shaken by China's armed occupation in 1962 of frontier territories claimed by India. Nehru's popular standing, once so sure, was further eroded by the tension in Kashmir.

The China debacle gave Nehru a fresh incentive to seek a final resolution of the Kashmir question. India could not afford two hostile fronts. Accordingly, during 1962–63, India and Pakistan engaged in several rounds of talks. Nehru was represented by the experienced Sardar Swaran Singh, and Pakistan's president, Field Marshal Ayub Khan, was represented by the young and ambitious Zulfikar Ali Bhutto.

However, no one represented Kashmir. As the Hazratbal incidents confirmed, it was scarcely prudent to neglect the sentiments of the people at the center of the dispute. And who better to take their pulse than Sheikh Abdullah? By the end of 1963, Nehru was already weighing the release of the sheikh. Then in January 1964, he suffered a stroke while addressing a Congress Party session in Bhubaneswar. Nehru understandably wondered if he would have a last shot at resolving the Kashmir crisis before he was gone. Thus, it was by order of the government of India that Sheikh Abdullah became a free man on April 8, 1964. In all, he had been in jail for more than ten years.

#### IV

Sheikh Abdullah's release was preceded by a statement from Lal Bahadur Shastri, a cabinet minister without portfolio and a confidant of Nehru's. Abdullah's detention, said Shastri, was "a matter of pain to the Government, and particularly to the Prime Minister."<sup>8</sup> As the sheikh stepped out of jail in Jammu, he was surrounded by a huge crowd of slogan-shouting admirers. After an hour of hugging and back slapping, he adjourned for a quiet cup of tea with Judge M. K. Tikoo, who had presided at his trial. For years Tikoo's court had reconsidered the charges of conspiracy against Abdullah. They were finally dropped, assuredly to the great relief of the judge, himself a Kashmiri, who had been pressured by circumstances to try Kashmir's favorite son.

After tea with the judge, Abdullah lunched with the staff of the jail in Jammu. Driving in an open car through that city, the sheikh was garlanded with bouquets. The next day he gave his first public speech. According to the *Hindustan Times*, "Sheikh Abdullah said the two pressing problems facing the subcontinent—communal strife and Kashmir—should be solved during Prime Minister Nehru's lifetime. He described Mr Nehru as the last of the stalwarts who had worked with Gandhiji and said that after him a solution of these problems would become difficult."

Nehru invited Abdullah to New Delhi. After consulting with friends and supporters, the sheikh set off to nearby Srinagar, stopping at towns and villages on the way. Wherever he halted, he also spoke. Thousands turned up to hear him, and in these gatherings, women outnumbered men. His speeches stressed the need for communal harmony in Kashmir. He likened the state to a bride cherished by two husbands—India and Pakistan—neither of whom "cared to ascertain what the Kashmiris wanted." He said he would meet Jawaharlal Nehru with an open mind, and implored Indians not to make up their minds either. As a

journalist noted, the Sheikh evinced "no personal bitterness, no rancour," rather he was imbued with "a strong sense of mission," a compelling desire to seek a solution for Kashmir. Asked at one meeting what he now felt about Nehru, Abdullah answered that he bore no ill-will, for "misunderstandings do occur even among brothers. I shall not forget the love Mr Nehru has showered on me in the past.... I will meet him as an old friend and comrade."

On April 18, a week after he had left Jammu, Abdullah drove in an open jeep into Srinagar. The 30-mile route was lined by a "near-hysterical crowd" a half-million strong. The road was covered with daisies and tulips, and festooned with arches and bunting. When he finally entered the city, the entire population of over 300,000 jammed the streets, "which were so richly decorated that even the sun did not penetrate the canopy of Kashmir silks, carpets and shawls."

Two days later, Abdullah addressed a mammoth rally in Srinagar. Some 250,000 people heard his tribute to Nehru, whom he described as a "fearless freedom fighter." The sheikh said he preserved this image of the Indian prime minister even though he held Nehru "principally responsible" for his imprisonment. Abdullah also recalled Nehru saying, back in 1947, that "Kashmir's future is the concern of Kashmiris alone."

Meanwhile, back in Delhi, the prospect of talks between Nehru and Abdullah alarmed many members of the ruling Congress Party. Senior ministers issued statements insisting that the question of Kashmir was "closed," and that the state was, and would remain, an integral part of India. Still more critical were members of the Jana Sangh, an opposition party that sought to represent the Hindu interest. The party's general secretary, Deen Dayal Upadhyaya, deplored the sheikh's recent speeches, where he seemed to have "questioned even the axiomatic facts of the Kashmir question" (such

as its final accession to India). “Instead of stabilizing the political situation of the State,” complained Upadhyaya, “Sheikh Abdullah has tried to unsettle every issue.” Angrier still was V. K. Malhotra of the Delhi unit of Jana Sangh, who claimed that in other countries speeches such as those made by the sheikh would be punishable by death.

The opposition from the Hindu right was predictable, but the Left was also suspicious of Abdullah. The Communist Party thought he was in danger of falling into an “imperialist trap” designed to detach Kashmir from India. Nehru was also barraged by criticism in Parliament. In one exchange, a young Jana Sangh representative, Atal Behari Vajpayee (who would later become India’s prime minister), commented that Abdullah believed not in the “two nation theory” but the “three nation theory”—that is, in a sovereign state of Kashmir. Nehru replied that he had been told the published accounts of Abdullah’s speeches were not entirely accurate, but in any case “he hoped to see Sheikh Abdullah soon and discuss matters with him without reference to press reports.”

More accurate, one hopes, was a report of an interview granted by Nehru and Indira Gandhi to French television, in which the prime minister answered in English, his daughter in flawless French. According to an English translation, “Mr Nehru explained to the French why the Kashmir problem had become such a burning subject in India.” On the other hand, “Mrs Gandhi said since the National Conference party had been elected three times in succession it is clear that no plebiscite is needed in Kashmir as the people have obviously made up their minds.” So had Mrs. Gandhi, and so, as we have seen, had most members of the Congress Party and the opposition.

Among members of the Indian political establishment, it seemed, only Nehru’s mind remained open. But he received unexpected support from two stalwarts who had also worked with Gandhiji. One was

Jayaprakash Narayan, popularly known as “JP,” the former radical socialist who for the past decade had been a leading light of the Sarvodaya movement, which, inspired by Gandhi, worked for religious harmony and rural uplift through nonviolent, nonstate methods. Writing in the *Hindustan Times*, JP deplored the threats to send Abdullah back to jail if he went “too far.” “It is remarkable,” he commented acidly, “how the freedom fighters of yesterday begin so easily to imitate the language of the imperialists.”

What alarmed politicians in Delhi was the sheikh’s talk about ascertaining afresh the wishes of the Kashmiri people. JP thought this eminently reasonable, since the elections in Jammu and Kashmir in 1957 and 1962 had been anything but free and fair. In any case, if India was “so sure of the verdict of the people, why are we so opposed to giving them another opportunity to reiterate it?” To those who feared that a plebiscite in Kashmir would lead to a Balkanization of the nation, JP answered that this was to assume that “the states of India are held together by force and not by the sentiment of a common nationality. It is an assumption that makes a mockery of the Indian Nation and a tyrant of the Indian State.” A satisfactory settlement of the Kashmir question would greatly improve relations between India and Pakistan. JP hoped that India’s leaders would “have the vision and statesmanship that this historic moment demands.” He added, “Happily, the one sane voice in the ruling party is that of the Prime Minister himself.”<sup>9</sup> More surprising perhaps was the endorsement received by Nehru from C. Rajagopalachari (“Rajaji”), the veteran statesman who had once been an intimate associate of Nehru’s but had latterly become a political opponent. As the founder of the Swatantra Party, Rajaji had savaged the prime minister’s economic and foreign policies, his attacks sometimes coming with a sharp personal tinge. Thus, in an essay published in January 1964, Rajaji had spoken of “megalomania and narcis-

sism” as being among the prime minister’s weaknesses.<sup>10</sup> But, to the surprise of his followers, he now strongly favored Nehru’s initiative in releasing Abdullah. He deplored the threats to put the sheikh back in jail and found it fortunate that “the Prime Minister may be ill but he preserves his balance, and has evidently refused to take any foolish step and degrade India.” The freeing of Abdullah, argued Rajaji, should be a prelude to allowing “the people of Kashmir [to] exercise their human right to rule themselves as well as they can.” In words that ring as true in 2004 as they did in 1964, Rajaji asked, “Are we to yield to the fanatical emotions of our anti-Pakistan groups? Is there any hope for India or for Pakistan, if we go on hating each other, suspecting each other, burrowing and building up armaments against each other.... We shall surely ruin ourselves for ever if we go on doing this.... We shall be making all hopes of prosperity in the future, a mere mirage if we continue this arms race based on an ancient grudge and the fears and suspicions flowing from it.”<sup>11</sup>

## V

Back in Kashmir, meanwhile, Sheikh Abdullah was conferring with his colleagues and associates. He discovered that while he was away in jail, the pro-Pakistan elements had gained much ground in the Valley. Indeed, the sheikh himself had come to be associated with the Pakistan party. In his trial, Abdullah had insisted that he never expressed a desire for Kashmir’s accession to Pakistan. India or independence: those were the only two options he had ever countenanced.<sup>12</sup> But the proceedings of his trial never reached the people of the Valley. They knew only that he was being tried for conspiracy against the Indian nation. Would not that make him, by default, a friend of Pakistan?

This assumption was bolstered by the propaganda of Bakshi Ghulam Mohammed’s government, which for a decade had de-

icted the sheikh as an agitator for a plebiscite, and hence anti-Indian. Moreover, the chicanery of the bakshi’s regime had tarnished the image of India among Kashmiris. Abdullah found that the pro-Pakistani elements were now perhaps in a majority in the Valley. Sensing the mood on the ground, he sought gradually to win over the people to his own view. He met the influential cleric Maulvi Farooq and urged him to support a “realistic” solution, rather than claim that Kashmir should accede to Pakistan in pursuance of the two-nation theory.<sup>13</sup> On April 23, two weeks after his release, Sheikh Abdullah addressed a prayer meeting in Srinagar. A solution to the Kashmir dispute, he said, must take into account its likely consequences for the 50 million Muslims in India, and the 10 million Hindus in East Pakistan. Three days later, in his last speech before leaving for Delhi, he urged Kashmiris to maintain communal peace, and thus set an example for both India and Pakistan. “No Muslim in Kashmir will ever raise his hand against the minorities,” he proclaimed. This concern for the fate of the minorities, thought the *Hindustan Times*, suggested that the sheikh had changed his mind about a plebiscite in Kashmir, which, if held, “might cause an upheaval in the subcontinent.”

As Abdullah prepared to leave for Delhi and his talks with Nehru, the Hindu right sought to undermine the meeting. One Jana Sangh ideologue, Balraj Madhok, said that to talk to Abdullah would “open the flood-gates of treason” among separatist elements in Assam, Nagaland, Goa, and Kerala. Another prominent Jana Sangh spokesman, Deen Dayal Upadhyaya, insisted that on no account should Nehru meet Abdullah. Instead, the Kashmir issue should be sorted out by a committee consisting of Congress ministers who, unlike the prime minister, were prone to see the state’s accession to India as final and closed. On April 28, the day before Abdullah was due to arrive in Delhi, the Jana Sangh mobilized a mass march on

the capital. The marchers shouted anti-Abdullah and anti-Nehru slogans, and demanded that the government declare Kashmir to be an “integral and indivisible” part of India.

The following day, Abdullah disembarked at Palam airport with his principal associates. They were met by Indira Gandhi, and those with her on the tarmac included a deputy foreign minister, representing the government, and the sheikh’s articulate champion, Jayaprakash Narayan. The party drove to Teen Murti House, where Nehru was waiting to receive Abdullah. This was the first time the two had seen one another since Nehru’s government had incarcerated the sheikh in August 1953. Now, as one eyewitness wrote, “the two embraced each other warmly. They were meeting after 11 years, but the way they greeted each other reflected no traces of embarrassment, let aside bitterness over what happened in the intervening period.” The sheikh presented Nehru with almonds, honey, saffron, and flowers from Kashmir, and the duo posed for the battery of photographers and television cameramen before going inside.

Abdullah stayed five days. He and Nehru met at least once or twice a day, usually without aides. While the prime minister was otherwise occupied, the sheikh canvassed a spectrum of Indian opinion. He placed a wreath on Gandhi’s *samadhi* in Rajghat, and addressed a prayer meeting at Delhi’s greatest mosque, the Jama Masjid.

The contents of the talks at Teen Murti House were kept secret, the press being told only that the two had discussed “the background to the Kashmir problem” as well as “the communal problem and its effect on the country as a whole.” But a clue as to specifics was elicited by a sharp reporter when he asked the sheikh whether he intended also to visit Pakistan to meet its president. Abdullah first quipped, “Why? I am getting good meals here.” Then he said, “Every sane person will say that it is desirable to bring India and Pakistan to-

gether.” Reminded that he had himself once supported Kashmir’s accession to India, the sheikh answered: “Yes. But it is not bringing peace to the subcontinent.”

Abdullah’s remarks, suggesting as they did that the question of accession was to be reopened, alarmed the pro-Indian chauvinists. The president of Jana Sangh in Jammu and Kashmir said angrily that if the sheikh wanted to go to Pakistan, let him go there for good. Others railed on about the “appeasement” of an unreliable ally. Even members of Nehru’s own party said they hoped the discussions would go nowhere. A senior minister, T. T. Krishnamachari, assured Parliament that the talks would be restricted to the “nuances” of the Kashmir question. They would not deal with fundamentals “because the fundamental issues had already been decided.”

Krishnamachari was speaking for himself and not, so far as we can tell, for his prime minister. However, his comments reflected the views of many other members of the Congress Party. Thus Home Minister G. L. Nanda insisted categorically that the “maintenance of the status quo [in Kashmir] was in the best interests of the subcontinent.” Twenty-seven Congress members of Parliament issued a statement arguing that “you can no more talk of self-determination in the case of Kashmir than in the case of, say, Bombay or Bihar.”

Within his own party, the only senior figure who appeared sympathetic to Nehru’s efforts was Lal Bahadur Shastri, a future prime minister. Some opposition politicians did see the point of speaking seriously with Abdullah. Thus the Swatantra Party leader Minoos Masani urgently wired the veteran Congress sage Rajaji: “Understand Nehru and Lalbahadur endeavouring to find solution with Sheikh Abdullah but are up against confused thinking within Congress Party alongside of Jan Sangh Communist combination. If you think telegram or letter to Jawaharlal from yourself encouraging him [to] do the right thing and assuring your



personal support would help please move in the matter.”<sup>14</sup>

Rajaji chose not to write to Nehru, perhaps because he was too proud, or because he feared a rebuff. But he did write to Lal Bahadur Shastri, urging that Kashmir be given some kind of autonomous status. As he saw it, “self-determination for Kashmir is as far as we are concerned a lesser issue than the aim of reducing Indo-Pak jealousy.” He thought that “the idea that if we ‘let Kashmir go,’ we shall be encouraging secessions everywhere is thoroughly baseless.... I hope you and Jawaharlalji will be guided by Providence and bring this great opportunity to a good result.”<sup>15</sup>

Rajagopalachari was now 85, and out of active politics. But he had once been called (by an Australian governor of Bengal) the “wisest man in India.” Many still respected his intellect, not least Sheikh Abdullah himself. Shortly after his release Abdullah had expressed his wish to “pay my respects personally to Rajaji, and have the benefit of his mature advice.”<sup>16</sup> Now, after his conversations with Nehru, he set off to meet the prime minister’s friend-turned-rival. He planned to stop at Wardha en route, to pay his respects to the veteran Gandhian leader Vinoba Bhave. As he jokingly told a journalist, he would discuss “spirituality” with Vinoba and “practical politics” with Rajaji.

On May 4, Lal Bahadur Shastri wrote to Rajaji urging him “to suggest to Sheikh Saheb not to take any extreme line.... Sheikh Saheb has just come out and it would be good for him to give further thought to the different aspects of the Kashmir question and come to a judgement after full and mature introspection and deliberation. It will be most unfortunate if things are done in a hurry or precipitated.”<sup>17</sup>

This was an airmail letter, but one does not know whether it reached Madras before Abdullah finally met Rajaji. They spoke for nearly four hours, provoking this headline in the *Hindustan Times*: “Abdullah, CR,

Evolve Kashmir Formula: A Proposal to Be Discussed with Prime Minister.” Rajaji did not say a word to the press, but Abdullah was more forthcoming. Speaking with the wise old man, he said, “had helped clear his mind about what would be the best solution which would remove this cancer from the body politic of India and Pakistan.” Pressed for details, the sheikh said these would have to await further talks with Nehru. He let on, however, that Rajaji and he had worked out “an honourable solution which would not give a sense of victory either to India or Pakistan and at the same time would ensure a place of honour to the people of Kashmir.”

While Abdullah was in Madras, word reached him that President Ayub Khan had invited him to visit Pakistan. On returning to Delhi, the sheikh went straight to Teen Murti House and spent 90 minutes with Nehru, apprising him of what was being referred to, somewhat mysteriously, as “the Rajaji formula.” The prime minister next directed Abdullah to an informal committee of advisers. This consisted of the foreign secretary, Y. D. Gundevia, the high commissioner to Pakistan, G. Parthasarathi, and the vice chancellor of the Aligarh Muslim University, Badruddin Tyabji.

Over two long days, Abdullah and Nehru’s committee discussed the Kashmir issue threadbare. All options were discussed: a plebiscite for the entire, undivided state of Jammu and Kashmir as it existed before 1947; the maintenance of the status quo; and a fresh division of the state, in which Jammu and Ladakh went to India, Azad Kashmir to Pakistan, with a plebiscite in the Valley to decide its future. Abdullah told the officials that while they could work out the specifics of the solution, he sought one that would: (1) promote Indo-Pakistani friendship; (2) not weaken the secular ideal of the Indian Constitution; (3) not weaken the position of the minorities in either country. He asked them to give him more than one alternative, which he could take with him to Pakistan.

The sheikh's conditions essentially ruled out a plebiscite, whose result, whatever it was, would leave one country dissatisfied, and minorities on both sides more vulnerable. What about the Rajaji formula? This, it appears, was to establish a condominium over Kashmir between India and Pakistan, with defense and external affairs being the joint responsibility of the two governments. Another possibility was of creating a confederation between India, Pakistan, and Kashmir.<sup>18</sup>

The three people advising Nehru were selected for their ability and knowledge; it is noteworthy nonetheless that they came from three different religious traditions. It is noteworthy too that they were all career government officials. Why the prime minister shunned his cabinet ministers in this regard is made clear in a letter written to Rajaji by one of his Swatantra MPs, B. Shiva Rao: "There is a clear attempt both from within the Cabinet and in Parliament to prevent the Prime Minister from coming to terms with Sheikh Abdullah if it should mean the reopening of the issue of accession. Many of these Ministers have made public statements while the discussion between the two are going on. It's a sign of the diminishing prestige and influence of the P. M. that they can take such liberties."

Rajagopalachari's reply was more interesting still. It gave more flesh to the "Rajaji formula," while putting Nehru's predicament in proper perspective:

Asking Ayub Khan to give a commitment in advance about Azad Kashmir now will break up the whole scheme. He will not and cannot give it. He is in a worse situation than Nehru in regard to public pressures and emotional bondage.... Any plan should therefore leave the prizes of war to be left untouched.... Probably the best procedure is for Sheikh to concentrate on the valley leaving Jammu as a counterpoise to

Azad Kashmir, to be presumed to be integrated to India without question.

This reduced shape of the problem is good enough, if solved as we desire, to bring about an improvement in the Indo-Pakistan relationship. And being of reduced size, would be a fitting subject for UN trusteeship partial or complete."<sup>19</sup>

Indeed, as Rajaji was writing these words, news came of a combative speech delivered by Ayub Khan to the Karachi Bar Association, where he spoke of "India's perfidious annexation of Jammu and Kashmir," and claimed that India was "set on persecuting and driving out Indian Muslims."

Sensibly, Nehru and Abdullah disregarded the outburst. The sheikh traveled around the country, speaking to groups of Muslims about his proposed visit to Pakistan. A lasting solution, he reiterated, would be one that gave neither India nor Pakistan a sense of victory; did not weaken India's secularism; satisfied the sense of honor of the people of Kashmir; and did not result in displacement or forced migration of individuals or communities. Speaking in Srinagar, he said that that "one visit to Pakistan will not do. I may even have to shuttle between New Delhi and Rawalpindi."

On the Indian side, the best, and most likely the last, hope for peace was Jawaharlal Nehru. On May 11, the sheikh told reporters that "I do not want to plead for Nehru but he is the symbol of India in spite of his weakness. You cannot find another man like him." He added that "after Nehru he did not see anyone else tackling [the problems] with the same breadth of vision."

For his part, Nehru was also prepared to give his old comrade and sometime adversary a sterling certificate of character. Speaking to the All-India Congress Committee in Bombay on May 16, he declared that the sheikh was wedded to the principles of secu-

larism. Both he and Nehru hoped that “it would be possible for India, holding on to her principles, to live in peace and friendship with Pakistan and thus incidentally to put an end to the question of Kashmir. I cannot say if we will succeed in this, but it is clear that unless we succeed India will carry the burden of conflict with Pakistan with all that this implies.”

## VI

On May 20, Sheikh Abdullah returned to Teen Murti House for a final round of talks before traveling to Pakistan. At a press conference, Nehru declined to disclose details, saying that he did not want to prejudice the sheikh’s mission. But he did indicate that his government was “prepared to have an agreement with Pakistan on the basis of their holding on to that part of Kashmir occupied by them.”<sup>20</sup>

Nehru’s own papers are closed to scholars, but a letter by his foreign secretary offers a clue to his thinking. Nehru had apparently asked legal experts to explore the implications of a confederation between India, Pakistan, and Kashmir “as a possible solution to our present troubles.” Such an arrangement would not imply an “annulment” of partition. India and Pakistan would remain separate, sovereign states. Kashmir would be part of the confederation, with its exact status to be determined by dialogue. There might be a customs union of the three units, some form of financial integration, and special provisions for the protection of minorities.<sup>21</sup>

To keep the discussion going, India was prepared to concede Pakistan’s hold over Azad Kashmir and Gilgit. Would Pakistan concede anything in return? As Abdullah prepared to depart for Rawalpindi, Mino Masani wrote to A. K. Brohi, sometime Pakistani high commissioner to India, who was a top Karachi lawyer and a certified member of the Pakistani establishment who had the ear of President Ayub Khan. “The nature of the response which he [the

sheikh] is able to evoke from President Ayub,” wrote Masani to Brohi, would “have a decisive influence in strengthening or weakening the hands of those who stand for Indo-Pakistan amity here.” Nehru’s Pakistan initiative was bitterly opposed from within his party and outside it. For it to make progress, for there to be a summit meeting between the prime minister and President Ayub Khan, it was “of the highest moment that Sheikh Abdullah should come back with something on which future talks could be based....” Masani urged Brohi to use his influence with Ayub and other leaders, so that their talks with Abdullah would “yield fruitful results in the interests of both countries.”<sup>22</sup> (Within Parliament, Masani was one of Nehru’s fiercest critics, but like his mentor Rajaji, he saw that progress on Kashmir was the key to the subcontinent’s future. On this subject at least he was willing to bat for Nehru. His was a constructive and principled opposition, so rare in that time, and so completely unfeasible in ours.)

Meanwhile, Abdullah proceeded to Pakistan. He hoped to spend two weeks there, beginning in the then-capital, Rawalpindi, moving on to Azad Kashmir, and ending in East Pakistan, where he intended to test the feelings of the Hindu minority. On May 24, he touched down in Rawalpindi to a tumultuous reception. He drove in an open car from the airport, the route lined by thousands of cheering Pakistanis. The welcome, said one reporter, “surpassed in intensity and depth that given to Mr Chou-en-Lai in February.”<sup>23</sup>

Later, talking to newsmen, Abdullah called his visit “a peace mission of an exploratory nature.” He appealed to the press to help cultivate friendship between India and Pakistan. “He said he had come to the definite conclusion that the armed forces of both the countries facing each other on the cease-fire line must be disengaged and that the edifice of a happy and prosperous Kashmir could be built only on permanent friendship between India and Pakistan.” As

in New Delhi, here too he emphasized that any solution to the dispute must not foster a sense of defeat for either India or Pakistan, must not weaken India's secularism or the future of its 60 million Muslims, and must satisfy the aspirations of the Kashmiris themselves.

The next day, on May 25, Abdullah met with Ayub Khan for three hours. The sheikh would not touch on the details, saying only that he found in Rawalpindi "the same encouraging response as in Delhi. There is an equal keenness on both sides to come to a real understanding...." Later that day, Abdullah addressed a mammoth public meeting in Rawalpindi. He was "cheered repeatedly as he spoke for two hours bluntly warning both Indians and Pakistanis from committing wrongs which would endanger the lives of the minorities in both countries." The time had come, he said, for India and Pakistan to bury the hatchet. For if "the present phase of tension, distrust and misunderstanding continued, both countries would suffer."

Chairing the meeting was Ghulam Abbas, a former president of Azad Kashmir, and an old rival of the sheikh's. They had known each other since the 1930s, when they fought for control of the popular movement against the autocratic rule of the maharaja. Abdullah won hands down. As a contemporary recalled, Abbas resented the fact that the sheikh was "greatly loved by the people of Kashmir at the time."<sup>24</sup> Now, 20-some years later, he sought to put a spoke in the sheikh's wheel. Thus, said Abbas, any settlement of the Kashmir problem could not ignore the People's Republic of China. Abdullah took angry exception, insisting that "neither India nor Pakistan should look to America, Britain, the Soviet Union or China for help in this matter. These countries changed their stands from time to time to suit their national interests." This was undoubtedly true, but it also appears that Abdullah would not brook any third-party mediator—except himself.

On May 26, Abdullah met Ayub Khan again, for four hours this time, and he came out beaming. The president, he told a crowded news conference, had agreed to a meeting with Nehru in mid-June. The meeting would take place in Delhi, and Abdullah would also be in the city, available for consultation. "Of all the irritants that cause tension between India and Pakistan," said the sheikh, "Kashmir is the most important. Once this great irritant is removed, the solution of other problems would not present much difficulty."

By this time, enchantment with the sheikh was wearing thin among the Pakistani elite. Their representative voice, the newspaper *Dawn*, wrote of how Abdullah's statements, "especially his references to India's so-called secularism, have caused a certain amount of disappointment among the public in general and the intelligentsia in particular." *Dawn* thought that the sheikh had been "lured by the outward show of Indian secularism, obviously forgetting the inhuman treatment meted out to 60 million Muslims in the so-called secular state." But the newspaper had a more fundamental complaint: that Abdullah had "taken up the role of an apostle of peace and friendship between Pakistan and India, rather than that of the leader of Kashmir, whose *prime objective should be to seek their freedom from Indian bondage.*"<sup>25</sup>

On May 27, Abdullah proceeded to Muzaffarabad, a town he had not seen since Kashmir was divided in 1947. He had no idea of how Kashmiris on this side of the cease-fire line would react to his proposals. Before he could find out, news reached him that Nehru had died. Abdullah at once "broke into tears and sobbed." In a muffled voice he told the reporters gathered around him, "He is dead, I can't meet him." Later, in a condolence meeting, Abdullah stated that "Mr Nehru's death had made his mission more difficult." For he had "pinned great hopes in the Nehru-Ayub meeting, and expected that they would arrive at an

agreement.” But he would not “lose his zeal and strive hard to find a solution to Kashmir and other Indo-Pakistan problems.”

Abdullah drove down to Rawalpindi, and got on the first flight to Delhi. When he reached Teen Murti and saw Nehru’s body, “he cried like a child.” It took him some time to “compose himself and place the wreath on the body of his old friend and comrade.” To this account from a newsman on the spot we must add the witness of a diplomat who accompanied Nehru’s body to the cremation ground. As the fire was burning the body to ashes, buglers sounded “The Last Post,” and “thus was symbolized the inextricability of India and England in Nehru’s life.” But before the fire finally died down, “Sheikh Abdullah leapt on the platform and, weeping unrestrainedly, threw flowers onto the flames; thus was symbolized the inextricability of the Muslim world in Nehru’s life and the pathos of the Kashmir affair.”<sup>26</sup>

## VII

How serious were the three protagonists for peace in April-May 1964? The protagonist who did not reveal his mindset, at least in public, was Ayub Khan. We know nothing about what he really thought at the time, whether he was indeed serious about a negotiated settlement on Kashmir and whether he would have been able to “sell” an agreement with India to his people. Sheikh Abdullah, on the other hand, was forthcoming with his views, expressing them to the press and in countless public meetings and orations. Some thought his words a mere mask for personal ambition. Writing in the *Economic Weekly*, one commentator claimed that “even a superficial study of his political behaviour convinces that he is embarked on a most ramified plan to win an independent State by skilfully exploiting the hates and the prejudices, conscious and unconscious, and the power political tangles which provide the background to Indo-Pakistan relations.”<sup>27</sup>

This seems to me too cynical by far. For Abdullah’s words, and still more his actions, make manifest his commitment to secularism, his concern for the minorities in both India and Pakistan. He was ambitious, certainly, but while in 1953 he seems to have fancied himself as the uncrowned king of Kashmir, in 1964 he saw himself rather as an exalted peacemaker, the one man who might bring tranquility and prosperity to a troubled subcontinent.

About Jawaharlal Nehru’s motives there should be no doubt at all. He was deeply troubled by guilt over Abdullah’s long incarceration, deeply worried about the continuing disaffection in Kashmir, deeply sensible of the long-term costs of the dispute to both India and Pakistan. The question does not concern his motives, but his influence. Would his colleagues listen to him? Thus, as the sheikh prepared to leave for Pakistan, Rajaji wrote: “I am afraid P. M. is not now and will not be in the near future strong enough to think and act in defiance of the unfortunate chauvinism ruling Delhi.... The only ray of hope now is in Earl Mountbatten who may give Mr Nehru good advice when he goes for the Commonwealth meet. And that advice will go much farther than any other advice or argument or consideration.”<sup>28</sup>

I think this, too, is excessively cynical. For Nehru had made up his mind to bid for peace. Still, one cannot be certain that he could have carried his party and the nation with him. His declining health, and the China war, had sharply circumscribed his authority. And the veins of chauvinism did run deep. Had he and Ayub Khan, with a little help from Abdullah, actually worked out a settlement, would it have passed the muster of the Congress Party, or of the Indian Parliament?

Possibly not. But even if it had, would it have worked in the long run? The legal expert consulted by Nehru’s office on the idea of a confederation delicately pointed out that “historically, confederations have

been dominated by one member or united under stress.”<sup>29</sup> In a proposed South Asian federation, would India behave like a big brother? Relevant here is a cartoon by Puri that appeared in the *Hindustan Times* the day Abdullah met Ayub Khan. This showed Pakistan’s president standing ruminatively, finger on chin, with the sheikh expansively gesticulating, and saying: “You’re afraid Delhi will try to dominate Pindi? My dear chap, when Delhi can’t dominate Lucknow or Chandigarh...”<sup>30</sup>

Here then were the imponderables—Ayub’s motives, Abdullah’s beliefs, Nehru’s strength, the viability of a condominium or a confederation. In the end, it was Nehru’s strength that gave way, literally. And, as a Pakistani newspaper noted, his passing meant “the end of a negotiated settlement of the Kashmir issue.” For whoever succeeded Nehru would lack “the stature, courage and political support necessary to go against the highly emotional tide of public opinion in India favouring a status quo in Kashmir.”<sup>31</sup>

In May 1965, less than a year after Nehru died, Sheikh Abdullah was back in jail. He had been to Mecca on a pilgrimage, stopping en route in Algiers. The Chinese prime minister Chou-en-Lai was also in the city, and he and Abdullah met. This alarmed the chauvinists in New Delhi, who arrested him as soon as he returned home. At about the same time, Ayub Khan was fighting a presidential election against Fatima Jinnah, sister of the founder of Pakistan. To ensure his victory, he presented himself as the man who would liberate Kashmir. Later in the year he sought to put this claim into action. A group of irregulars crossed the cease-fire line in August, with a view to fomenting an insurrection in the Valley. Soon there was full-scale war between India and Pakistan, which lasted three weeks, and was ended only by international intervention.

With the 1965 war commenced decades of uncertainty in Kashmir. These have been years of war, conflict, and above all, suffer-

ing. Blame for this state of affairs accrues to all sides. Both India and Pakistan have behaved abominably. So too, it must be said, have the presumed leaders of the Kashmiri people, be they nepotistic and corrupt politicians, or bloody and brutal “freedom-fighters.”<sup>32</sup>

In this time there has been talk, but never serious talk. Between 1971 and 1990, it was India who had no real interest in dialogue. Its leaders saw Pakistan as divided and weak, and the Vale of Kashmir as stable, especially after Sheikh Abdullah became chief minister in 1975. Between 1990 and 2001, it was Pakistan that believed it unnecessary to look for answers. The insurgency was gaining strength in Kashmir. Bled by a thousand cuts, wouldn’t India have to give up the Valley sooner or later?

The events of 9/11 changed all this. Pakistan’s protestations about giving only “moral support” to the Kashmir struggle became increasingly feeble and unconvincing. Under pressure from Washington, the Pakistan government was forced, at least publicly, to redesignate *jihadists* as terrorists. Meanwhile, faced with widespread allegations of human rights abuses by the army, India called state elections in Jammu and Kashmir in 2002, the first free elections in the state in 25 years.

One is tempted to draw parallels between the events of April-May 1964 and events of our own time. After decades of suspicion and hostility, a conversation has once again commenced between India and Pakistan over Kashmir. Notably, it began in the last days of the government of Atal Behari Vajpayee, a man who, like Nehru, was seeking in the evening of his political life to bring about peace between India and Pakistan. (As with Nehru, his efforts were criticized strongly by elements within his own party.) And is Gen. Pervez Musharraf an updated version of Ayub Khan, like his predecessor a whisky-drinking ruler who tries, as best he can, to keep his distance from the *jihadists*? And what then of the Kashmiris?

Admittedly, there is no Sheikh Abdullah now, no single leader who authoritatively embodies the aspirations of his people. The closest one comes to a representative body is Kashmir's All-Party Hurriyat Conference. Notably, the Hurriyat has in recent months been more open to dialogue and reason than at any other time in the past decade. Even within the militant groups, there are individuals who see that the armed struggle is going nowhere.

In 40 years much has changed in Kashmir, in India, in Pakistan, in the world. However, in its essentials the contours of the dispute have scarcely changed at all. Now, as then, a solution to this most intractable of conflicts must satisfy the conditions specified long ago by Sheikh Abdullah. It must not lead to a sense of victory for either India or Pakistan. It must make more secure the minorities in both countries. And it must satisfy the aspirations of the people of Kashmir. ●

## Notes

1. Baroo, "Kashmir Interlude," *Swatantra* (Madras), November 29, 1947.
2. Ajit Bhattacharjya, *Kashmir: The Wounded Valley* (Delhi: UBSPD, 1994), pp. x–xii.
3. Nehru to Hari Singh, November 13, 1947, in S. Gopal ed., *Selected Works of Jawaharlal Nehru: Second Series, Volume V* (New Delhi: Jawaharlal Nehru Memorial Fund, 1987), pp. 324–27. Mahatma Gandhi was also deeply impressed with the sheikh's secularism. In the last week of November 1947, Abdullah visited Delhi, where he accompanied Gandhi to a meeting held on the birthday of the founder of the Sikh faith, Guru Nanak. As Gandhi told the gathering: "You see Sheikh Abdullah Saheb with me. I was disinclined to bring him with me, for I know that there is a great gulf between the Hindus and the Sikhs on one side, and the Muslims on the other. But the Sheikh Saheb, known as the Lion of Kashmir, although a pucca Muslim, has won the hearts of both, by making them forget that there is any difference between the three.... Even though in Jammu, recently, the Muslims were killed by the Hindus and Sikhs, he went to Jammu and invited the evil-doers to for-

get the past and repent over the evil they had done. The Hindus and the Sikhs listened to him. Now the Muslims and the Hindus and the Sikhs...are fighting together to defend the beautiful valley of Kashmir. I am glad, therefore, that you are receiving the two of us with cordiality" (*Collected Works of Mahatma Gandhi*, vol. XC, pp. 122–24).

4. *The Current* (Bombay), August 26, 1953. Stevenson, however, held that while when they met Abdullah did seem keen on an independent Kashmir, he did not provide any encouragement—as he put it, he did the listening, the sheikh the talking. See Sarvepalli Gopal, *Jawaharlal Nehru: A Biography, Volume II* (New Delhi: Oxford University Press, 1979), p.131, n. 65.

5. For the circumstances of the sheikh's dismissal and arrest, see Karan Singh, *Autobiography* (Delhi: Oxford University Press, 1994), pp. 160–64. The political history of Jammu and Kashmir in these crucial years, 1947 to 1953, is covered in a number of works. The Pakistani point of view is ably articulated in Alastair Lamb, *Kashmir: A Disputed Legacy, 1846–1990* (Karachi: Oxford University Press, 1992); the Indian point of view in Prem Shankar Jha, *Kashmir, 1947: Rival Versions of History* (Delhi: Oxford University Press, 1996). Relatively detached, so to say "neutral," accounts include Josef Korbel, *Danger in Kashmir*, 2nd ed. (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1966); and Michael Brecher, *The Struggle for Kashmir* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1953). A particularly valuable work is Sisir Kumar Gupta, *Kashmir: A Study in India-Pakistan Relations* (Bombay: Asia Publishing House, 1966). Sheikh Abdullah's own version of these events is contained in *Flames of the Chinar: An Autobiography*, abridged, trans. from the Urdu and introduced by Khushwant Singh (New Delhi: Penguin India, 1995).

6. Nehru to Tikaram Paliwal, July 17, 1955, in H. Y. Sharada Prasad and A. K. Damodaran, eds., *Selected Works of Jawaharlal Nehru: Second Series, Volume 29* (New Delhi: Jawaharlal Nehru Memorial Fund, 2001), pp. 452–53. Farooq had been to see Nehru in Delhi, where he told him that his classmates routinely referred to his father as a "traitor." This prompted the prime minister to write to Paliwal, a minister in the Rajasthan state government, asking him to ensure that the boy had "proper living quarters and some friendly companionship," so that he did not

develop any “complexes and the like.” As Nehru put it, “Some people foolishly imagine that because we have had differences with Sheikh Abdullah, therefore we are not favourably inclined towards his son and his family. This, of course, is not only absurd but is just the reverse of how we feel. Personally, because Sheikh Abdullah is in prison, I feel rather a special responsibility that we should try to help his sons and family.”

7. Aparna Basu, *Mridula Sarabhai: Rebel with a Cause* (Delhi: Oxford University Press, 1996), chap. 9; *Hindustan Times*, April 9, 1964.

8. The following paragraphs on Abdullah’s release and his triumphant return to the Valley are based principally on the *Hindustan Times* issues of April 6–24, 1964.

9. Jayaprakash Narayan, “Our Great Opportunity in Kashmir,” *Hindustan Times*, April 20, 1964.

10. C. Rajagopalachari, “The Congress Resolution,” *Swarajya*, January 11, 1964.

11. C. Rajagopalachari, “Am I Wrong?” *Swarajya*, April 25, 1964.

12. Cf. the report of the trial proceedings in *Dawn* (Karachi), November 18, 1960.

13. See the report in the *Hindustan Times*, April 23, 1964. In the rest of this section, quotes not given specific attributions come from this newspaper.

14. Telegram dated April 29, 1964, in Subject File No. 92, C. Rajagopalachari Papers, Nehru Memorial Museum and Library (hereafter cited as NMML).

15. Letter of April 29, 1964, in Subject File No. 92, C. Rajagopalachari Papers, NMML. As some other letters in this file show, most Swatantra Party members opposed Masani and Rajaji in their support of the Nehru-Abdullah talks. K. M. Munshi said that the sheikh should be put back in jail. Dahyabhai Patel (son of Vallabhbhai Patel) said that the only solution to the Kashmir problem was to settle the Valley with Hindu refugees from East Pakistan.

16. Abdullah to Minoos Masani, April 16, 1964, in Subject File No. 92, C. Rajagopalachari Papers, NMML.

17. Shastri to Rajaji, May 4, 1964, in Subject File No. 92, C. Rajagopalachari Papers, NMML.

18. “Kashmir—Talk with Sheikh Abdullah on 8th May, 1964, at PM’s House,” Subject File No. 4, Y. D. Gundevia Papers, NMML.

19. Shiva Rao to Rajaji, May 10, 1964, and Rajaji to Shiva Rao, May 12, 1964, Subject File No. 92, C. Rajagopalachari Papers, NMML.

20. *Hindustan Times*, May 23, 1964.

21. Y. D. Gundevia to V. K. T. Chari (Attorney-General, Madras), May 13, 1964, Subject File No. 4, Y. D. Gundevia Papers, NMML.

22. Letter of May 20, 1964, Subject File No. 92, C. Rajagopalachari Papers, NMML.

23. *Hindustan Times*, May 25, 1964. Unless otherwise indicated, the rest of this section is based on reports in the *Hindustan Times*, May 25–30, 1964.

24. Malka Pukhraj, *Song Sung True: A Memoir*, trans. and ed. Saleem Kidwai (New Delhi: Kali for Women, 2003), pp. 200–01.

25. As quoted in the *Hindustan Times*, May 27, 1964 (emphasis added).

26. Walter R. Crocker, *Nehru: A Contemporary’s Estimate* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1966), p. 178.

27. Romesh Thapar, “Behind the Abdullah Headlines,” *Economic Weekly* (Bombay), May 30, 1964.

28. Letter to B. Shiva Rao, May 12, 1964, in Subject File No. 92, C. Rajagopalachari Papers, NMML.

29. V. K. T. Chari to Y. D. Gundevia, May 16, 1964, in Subject File No. 4, Y. D. Gundevia Papers, NMML.

30. *Hindustan Times*, May 26, 1964.

31. Quoted in the *Hindustan Times*, May 29, 1964.

32. Among the many recent works on the subject, I would especially recommend Victoria Schofield, *Kashmir in Conflict: India, Pakistan and the Unending War* (London: I. B. Tauris, 2003).