

TRAGEDY IN KASHMIR

A. H. SUHARWARDY

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WAJIDALIS

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By

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To
all those anonymous martyrs who
laid down their lives
for the cause
of Kashmir's
Freedom

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Preface

What the net sees of the condition of the river, says a Kashmiri proverb, the fisherman does not see. A son of the soil, I have studied and watched with deep anguish, as a student and civil servant, on both sides of divided Kashmir, a beautiful country becoming a helpless pawn in the international chess of power politics and the resultant sundering of a country, of homes, of families, even of farms by the unnatural Cease-Fire Line. Many facts about Kashmir immediately preceding or following her so-called accession to the Indian Union are still half-told, ill-told or untold. An attempt has been made in the present volume at presentation of relevant facts by a Kashmiri Muslim, as truthfully as possible. For truth, like a prism, has many facets; and although there are many accounts in English of these events, as seen by Indian or Western eyes, there is none so far by a non-official Kashmiri Muslim, who supports accession of the State to Pakistan. About controversial points, evidence cited in this book is mostly either in the nature of admissions, or from neutral sources and from the writings of men who can be called natural witnesses.

A word about some of the information in this book which has not found place in any available written or published account. The first twenty-five years of the author's life were spent in what is now Indian-held Kashmir. After his migration to Pakistan in 1948, he worked as a civil servant in Azad Kashmir for more than twenty years. The fund of personal knowledge gained over this period was supplemented by interviews with about one hundred political leaders and military commanders, still alive and available, for giving a first-hand account of various events. In Azad Kashmir, there is hardly a person connected with these events, whom the author does not know or a place which he has not seen. Such persons are however fast fading away; and in five to ten years' time none may live to tell the tale. It may then be well-nigh impossible to set the record straight.

The present volume practically ends with the coming into effect of a Cease Fire on January 1, 1949 except for some stray strands which run into the future. Events or developments subsequent to this date are, by and large, outside the scope of the present book. The object of giving

Preface

details of fighting in Kashmir is to highlight the fact that it was mainly the ill-fed, ill-clad, ill-equipped, and ill-organised Azad Kashmir volunteers together with undisciplined Pathan tribesmen, and not the Pakistani army, who bore the brunt of the mighty Indian army. Although a very limited number of Pakistani troops was inducted into Azad Kashmir, in 1948 at some strategic positions in the rear, to prevent a sudden Indian breakthrough to places like Mangla head-works, the fighting at the front, overwhelmingly guerrilla in character, was still done by ex-serivemen of Kashmir Maharaja's forces, volunteers, mostly untrained, and semi-organised bands of tribesmen, without air cover and without support of armour or adequate artillery.

The author acknowledges his debt of gratitude to the authors and publishers of numerous books, some of which are listed in the Select Bibliography appended to this volume. The author is also grateful to those well-wishers and friends who went through various parts of the manuscript and gave valuable suggestions. My thanks are particularly due to Mr. Q.U. Shahab, Sardar M. Habib Khan, Mian Manzar Bashir, Prof. Ihsan-ul-Haq, Col. Sarwar of the National Defence College Library, Mr. Abdul Haq of the Army Central Library, Rawalpindi and the concerned army authorities who very kindly allowed me to consult these libraries.

Rawalpindi,
December 29, 1978

ABDUL HAQ SUHARWARDY

To this day, many important portions of the sad story of the Muslims of Kashmir remain untold, ill-told or half-told. This is therefore an attempt to fill up the gap and remove some misconceptions. Here is the story of the intolerable but silent sufferings of an oppressed people, the distant rumblings of discontent and then the political eruption of 1931 which set Kashmir on the road of awakening and unrest; the story of the fluctuating fortunes of the Kashmiri Muslims in the subsequent years, of the divisive forces working from outside and of the final collapse of their amazing edifice of political unity. More importantly, it is the story of the heroic struggle and open revolt by the brave people of Poonch much before the ofttrumpeted tribal incursion. Driven by desperation by all too transparent plans of mass genocide of Muslims, these poor and ill-armed, though well-trained, war veterans rose in their thousands to stem the tide of Maharaja Kashmir's callous campaign of genocide.

It is the story of the dark designs of the top Congress leaders to grab Kashmir by any means, fair or foul, and kill Pakistan during her teething troubles. The secret conspiracies of the Indian Government and the partisan, even perfidious, role played by the British viceroy, Lord Mountbatten, has been proved by the testimony of the opponents of Pakistan and neutral European and American writers. In fact, the wealth of references cited makes the book invaluable.

It has also been shown that the tribal incursion did not trigger the real trouble; it only provided a welcome and convenient excuse to the Indians to make a massive military intervention in Kashmir. Last but not the least, it is a story of the epic resistance of the ill-equipped, ill-trained, ill-clothed and ill-fed sons of the soil, without the cover of either air force or armour, to the well-equipped, well-trained, well-clothed, well-fed and numerically much larger Indian Army. The account ends with an analysis of the causes of failure and the tragedy that has been enacted in Kashmir. A moving story, beautifully told, first fascinates and then grips the reader.

