

An unrelated century-old picture of Mubarak Mandi Jammu

JAMMU GENOCIDE 1947



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CIRCA 1947: A LONG STORY

By

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‘Holocaust of the East, Not Mentioned in Books

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Zanaan Wanaan**

By Ather Zia

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EDITOR’S NOTE

The Jammu genocide was a systematically organized massacre of Kashmiri Muslims in 1947. Researchers and authors had explored several credible pieces of evidence about this genocide. This booklet is a compilation of two articles “Circa 1947: A Long Story” written by Khalid Bashir Ahmad and “Holocaust of the East, Not Mentioned in Books” authored by Dr Ather Zia. KPRI welcomes any piece of evidence, book or any other material related to this genocide.

Dr. Raja Muhammad Sajjad Khan
Director KPRI

CIRCA 1947: A LONG STORY

By

Khalid Bashir Ahmad

During the Partition of India in 1947 the sub-continent was engulfed by communal frenzy resulting in mass killing, rape, abduction, arson and dislocation of population. At the lowest estimate, half a million people were slaughtered and twelve million became homeless.[i] On the higher side, the death toll is accounted for more than a million. There is no count of women being abducted and raped. The pain and agony unleashed by violence on victims is undescrivable even as many of these carnages have been documented through print and visual media.

STATE SPONSORED VIOLENCE

Maharaja Hari Singh was aware of widespread violence against Muslims but did not try to control or stop it. Muhammad Yusuf Saraf, on the basis of a secondary source, alleges that the Maharaja himself shot down three *Gujjars* at Mishriwala.[xi] The serious charge, however, is not corroborated by any other source even as Hari Singh cannot be absolved of what happened with his Muslim subjects. The first Muslim Indian Civil Service (ICS) officer from Jammu & Kashmir, Qudratullah Shahab, sees the ruler's direct involvement in what befell his Muslim subjects:

“Soon after entering into the Standstill Agreement with Pakistan Maharaja Hari Singh decided that the entire Muslim population in Jammu Province should be wiped out. Himself taking the command of the task he let loose like hounds the contingents of Dogra army, police and Rashtriya Swayamsewak Sangh on Muslim subjects.”[xii]

Prominent political activist and writer, Krishan Dev Sethi observe:

“The Maharaja and his administration played an important role in flaring up communal riots after Hari Singh arrived from Srinagar. Muslims in Jammu city were under the influence of the Muslim Conference. The Maharaja played a significant role in promoting and pampering the RSS in Jammu. Important RSS leaders like Balraj Madhok, Kedar Nath Sahni, Vijay Malhotra and Madan Lal Khurana remained stationed in Jammu as in-charge of RSS during 1940s.”



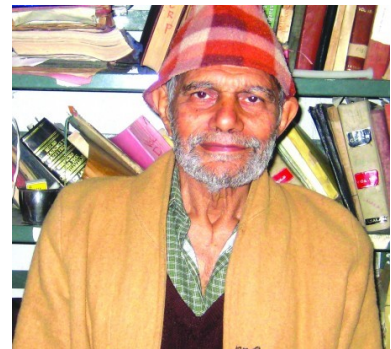
“Governor Chet Ram Chopra and DIG Police, Bakhshi Udhay Chand, also played vital role. The administration too participated in the massacre. Organized armed Hindu *jathas* (groups) went as far as Bhimbhar.”[xiii]

Corroborating Sethi's view on Hari Singh's link up with the RSS, social activist, Balraj Puri, an eyewitness to Jammu violence, says: “The Maharaja had RSS leader Guru Golwalkar as his personal guest and his *rajguru*, Sant Dev's role was also dubious.”[xiv] The role of the

RSS in anti-Muslim violence in Jammu Province is a matter of record. That a conspiracy was hatched at the highest level of power is alluded to by Muhammad Ibrahim Khan, former President of Pakistan Administered Jammu & Kashmir, according to whom a secret meeting of some non-Muslim rulers of Indian princely states was held near Srinagar in July 1947 where a “conspiracy was devised in collaboration with the RSS from Amritsar to carry out a wholesale massacre of Musssalmans [Muslims] in the State, beginning with Poonch where they expected stiff resistance... A plan was evolved to completely wipe out the Muslim population in the city of Jammu, and also in the districts of Jammu Province.”[xv]

Hari Singh’s hands have not been quite clean. While fleeing from Srinagar he is accused of directing his people en-route Jammu to ‘finish’ Muslims. Balraj Puri also alludes to this allegation[xvi]. According to senior advocate of Jammu & Kashmir High Court and a survivor of the carnage, Shabir Ahmad Salahria:

“The role of Maharaja Hari Singh in fuelling communal riots cannot be overlooked. He was responsible for fuelling attacks on Muslims. The Maharaja visited many places and instead of dousing communal flames he encouraged rioters.”[xvii]



Salahria holds that if the Maharaja had not lost the balance the situation might not have gone as bad as it did. Salahria’s father, Ferozuddin, saw Hari Singh ‘encouraging killers’. He was District Forest Officer at Kathua and had to flee to Jammu in Hindu dress to avoid identification and attack. On way to home, he saw the Maharaja gathered around by people who were boastfully informing him about the number of Muslims they had killed. “The Maharaja patted and encouraged them.”[xviii]

Ved Bhasin, who has lived through the developments unfolding in Jammu in 1947, believes that the administration was fully responsible for the massacre of Muslims and changing the demographic character of Jammu.[xix] He recalls that as a student leader during those horrible times he had published a pamphlet titled ‘*Insaniyat Ke Naam*’ (In the Name of Humanity) urging for communal amity. He was summoned by Governor Chet Ram Chopra and warned to desist from issuing appeals for peace or else he will be arrested. Chopra told him that there was danger from Muslims and hence Hindus and Sikhs were being imparted training in firearms. Bhasin also recalls a meeting taken by Maharaja’s last Prime Minister, Mehar Chand Mahajan, which he also attended, where the latter said that power was being transferred to people and Hindus and Sikhs should demand parity with Muslims. When asked how was that possible as they were in minority, Mahajan, pointing towards the forest area down the Maharaja’s palace where corpses of recently butchered Muslim Gujajrs were scattered, said “ the population ratio can change.”[xx]

About active involvement of State authorities in the killing and driving out Muslims Alastiar Lamb observes:

“[The] State authorities joined openly in this anti-Muslim policy by setting out to create along the State’s border with Pakistan (in the region of Gujarat and Sialkot) a depopulated

zone some three miles deep. Hindus here were evacuated. Muslims were either killed or driven across into Pakistan. On a number of occasions Jammu & Kashmir State Forces actually crossed over into Pakistan and destroyed villages there... Early in October British observers saw in one such village on the Pakistan side of the border no fewer than 1,700 corpses of slaughtered Muslim men, women and children.”[xxi]

Organized violence against Muslims was also observed by journalist, G. K. Reddy, who was removed as Editor of Kashmir Times and ousted from Jammu & Kashmir for advocating its accession to Pakistan. He saw “a mad orgy of Dogra violence against unarmed Muslims [that] should put any self-respecting human being to shame”. [xxii] Reddy in an interview published in the *Civil & Military Gazette* on October 28, 1947 saw “armed bands of ruffians and soldiers shooting down and hacking to pieces helpless Muslim refugees heading towards Pakistan” and watching officials and military officers “directing a huge armed mob against a Muslim refuge convoy [that it] hacked to pieces.” [xxiii] He counted as many as twenty-four villages burning one night [while] all through the night the rattling fire of automatic weapons could be heard from the surrounding refugee camps. The *Civil & Military Gazette* in its November 21, 1947 issue also reported a party of Englishmen interviewing 200 wounded refugees at Sialkot and being “convinced that there has been a disgraceful massacre of Muslims in Jammu.” [xxiv]

The two Englishmen identified by Christopher Snedden as possible pacifist Quakers not ideologically driven, detailed ten separate violent incidents against Muslims in Jammu that occurred between the beginning of October and November 9, 1947. These incidents, reported by the *Civil & Military Gazette* on December 18, 1947 as also reproduced by Snedden, include massacres on October 20 near Kathua and Akhnoor Bridge, on October 22 at Samba, on October 23 at Maogaon, on November 5 and 6 at Jammu City and on November 9 near Suchetgarh. As many as 70,000 Muslims were reported to have been killed in these seven incidents alone. [xxv]

Of the seven specific incidents of violence four occurred when Hari Singh was still in power and had not acceded to India. “The killers supposedly included ‘State’ or ‘Dogra’ troops in all instances.” [xxvi] At one point in time, G. C. Bali, Deputy Director General of Intelligence and a confidante of the Indian Prime Minister, wrote to Jawaharlal Nehru from Jammu that the Dogra and Rajput soldiers of the army were “torching villages like rioters, abducting women and raping them. The silence of the Maharaja and people in power here was only emboldening them”. [xxvii]

Balraj Puri has a point to establish the culpability of the administration in the anti-Muslim riots in Reasi. According to him:

“The killing of Muslims was well organized. The hand of the administration was clearly visible. I sent a telegram to the government from Reasi informing that threat to Muslims there was looming large. Instead of sending security for their protection, a *jatha* of Hindu communalists came to me on the second or third day and their leader asked where lay the danger and that they would like to go there and see. It was a strange situation. These were the people against whom I had sent a telegram and here they were demanding to know where

the danger was! Obviously, the government machinery was actively involved in the massacre. How else would the rioters have known about the telegram?[xxviii]

Hari Singh did not speak about the Jammu killings nor chose to expose those who were responsible for it if his own hands were clean.

BLOODBATHS ACROSS THE PROVINCE

The killing of Muslims outside Jammu City had started in August 1947 and continued for months at different places. The districts of Reasi, Udhampur, Kathua and Chenab *jagir* in east Jammu Province were the worst scenes of savagery. No mercy was shown to women, children or the aged. Many a time the victims were promised to be taken to safer places but murdered in cold blood. In most of the cases the murderers were known faces. Rishi Kumar Kaushal, who later became a senior politician of Jammu, took part in the slaughter of Muslims in Reasi.[xxix] He was seen running after the victims with a gun and shooting them down.[xxx] At Ram Nagar in Udhampur district, *Tehsildar* Chander Udhay Singh, son of Maharaja's ADC, Brigadier Faqir Singh, supervised massacre of Muslims.

REASI SAW ONE OF THE WORST CARNAGES.

Muslims, both in the district and tehsil of Reasi, were in majority. Their overall population in the district (which then included area under the present Rajouri district), as per Census of 1941, was 1,75,539 (67%) as against 80,725 Hindus (31%). Likewise, in Reasi tehsil the number of Muslims was 64,144 as against 52,501 Hindus. Despite being in majority Muslims were attacked and killed by armed Hindu gangs who had mostly come from outside Reasi.

On November 4, 1947, a *jatha* (band) of 500-600 armed men arrived in Reasi town camped at Sher Bagh where now the Deputy Commissioner's office is located. Preparations for the attack had been made at Jammu. Ahmad Shah Kalla, a respectable of the area, Abdul Aziz Bhat, a Panch, and Muzaffar Ahmad, a judge, went to the Deputy Commissioner and informed him about the arrival of the *jatha* and their apprehensions about an attack on Muslims.[xxxi] He undermined the development saying that no armed men had arrived in Reasi. The three men decided to go to Sher Bagh to persuade the *jatha* to go away but, having no faith in him, refused to take the Deputy Commissioner with them. Instead, they chose a prominent Hindu liberal, Shanti Swaroop [father of Balraj Puri], to accompany them. The four of them went to the Sher Bagh and tried to reason with the armed men the need for communal peace. Kalla pleaded with them that local Hindus and Muslims had formed a peace committee and decided to maintain communal harmony in the area. He asked them to go away from Reasi but they did not listen to him and one of them pulled out his sword and killed him on the spot.[xxxii] Abdul Aziz Bhat and Muzaffar Ahmad were also killed. A shocked Shanti Swaroop felt helpless and later shut himself up in his house.

The killing continued for several days. The Reasi carnage was one of the largest massacres enacted in Jammu Province. Abdur Rauf, 58, grandson of Ahmad Shah Kalla, says that out of a population of 8000 Muslims in the city only 250 survived.[xxxiii] Of them, only a dozen

stayed back at Reasi and the rest fled to Pakistan. As many as 26 members of the Kalla family were killed.

The survivors have chilling memories of the massacre. Mehmood Ahmad Khan, who was about 6-7 years old when riots in Reasi broke out, recalls that it was about 3 P.M. when rioters let hell loose on them.[xxxiv] Mehmood's is a heart rending story. Five of his family members including mother, father and brothers were killed. His two sisters and nieces were put on logs and pushed into the Chenab ostensibly to drown them in the river. His mother alongwith her one year old son, Yunis, was drowned while saving the girls. Left alone, Mehmood was taken by a Hindu and kept hidden from rioters for two days. Then the rioters showed up and took him to the river bank to kill him. Mercifully, an army man named Makhan rescued him and took him to his home in Khairian. He was not treated well there and ultimately Birbal, a Brahmin took him to his place, converted him to Hinduism through a *Pandit* (priest) at a specially held function and rechristened him as Gulaboo. He spotted *choti* (tuff of hair) and was told that if somebody asked his name he should tell the assumed name Gulabo. He was with Birbal for two years shepherding his goats with other children of the village of his age.

One day, Pandit Durga Dutt, a *hakeem* of Reasi happened to pass through the village and recognized Mehmood. Dutt went back to Reasi and informed Haji Akbar, one of handful of Muslim survivors there, about his fate and asked him to get Mehmood back. A man was sent to Khairian who asked Birbal to let Mehmood go with him. Birbal did not object. Gulaboo's *choti* was shaved signalling his return to the original faith. In early 1980s, Mehmood came to know that his two sisters and nieces who were pushed into the Chenab had luckily crossed the river and escaped to Sialkot in Pakistan. In 1983, he visited them. After about 45 years he also visited Khairian village and met the 'boys' with whom he would graze goats of Birbal. He visited the house of Birbal but found out that he had passed away.

UDHAMPUR DISTRICT WAS ANOTHER SCENE OF SAVAGERY.

The district had a slightly higher population of Hindus at 164,820 (56.01%) against 128,327 Muslims (43.61%) [Census of 1941]. Hindus predominated in tehsils of Udhampur, Ramnagar (severely affected by violence) and Bhaderwah while Muslims were in majority in Kishtwar and Ramban.

In Udhampur, as narrated by a massacre survivor and former legislator, Wazira Begum, children were cut into small pieces and cooked with rice to be served to survivors of the massacre.[xxxv] On seeing pieces of tiny fingers in food women got hysterical and cried inconsolably. From the maternal side of the Begum at Dadoo Basantgarh as many as 70 people were killed. Muslims were assembled in the mansion of Colonel Abdur Rehman and burnt alive. The Begum's mother and two brothers were also killed. At village Sailan Da Palad, a huge fire was lit in which bodies were thrown to roast.[xxxvi]

Master Sheikh Ghulam Hussain, father of noted Punjabi and Urdu fiction writer, Khalid Hussain, aged 37 was asked to call his God, as he would say *Azan* (call for prayers) at a high pitch. Hussain, who was carrying a copy of the Quran recited the verses of *Azan* and

jumped into the fire before the marauders would have killed him. He was burnt alive. Hussain's father, Sheikh Habib Ullah, brothers, Sheikh Abdul Karim and Sheikh Abdul Qayoom, brother-in-law, Muhammad Din and two young sons were also killed in the carnage. Colonel Abdur Rehman's entire family was eliminated. He and Ghulam Nabi Naayi, local barber, were the only two survivors of the carnage. They somehow fled from the scene. Rehman later remarried at the age of 70.

Among the casualties at Udhampur was Raja Sarwar Khan of Mirpur who was *Wazir-i-Wazarat* or Deputy Commissioner of Udhampur district. Khan was tricked into a conspiracy. He was told by one Amarnath Sharma, who later became a minister, that *Raja* of Chenahni had sent a word for him to shift there for his safety. Khan believed Sharma and left for Chenahni in his car. He had hardly travelled a mile when his vehicle was ambushed by a gang of killers and was killed in cold blood.[xxxvii]

Chenahni *jagir* was yet another scene of slaughter. Muslims in the *jagir* were in minority and their number stood at 2205 against 9581 Hindus [Census of 1941]. The survivors believe that Maharani Tara Devi, wife of Hari Singh, instigated the rioters. About 80 Muslims – women, children and infirm males – who could not flee as did many others to safer places like Marmat -were collected at one place and kept there for about a month. Later, they were taken out of Chenahni on the promise of transporting them to Pakistan but were massacred at Gangladi, Lower Kud.[xxxviii] A group of 155 Muslims led by one Amiruddin was tricked by a killer *jatha* into gruesome killing by assuring them safety. Sant Ram, one of the rioters, had taken them and lodged in a double storied Dak Bungalow at Guna village. The door was bolted from outside and the building set on fire. They were all roasted alive. A lady, Fatima Bibi, jumped out of the window but was killed by a bullet fired by one Jabu Brahmin.

The *raja* of Chenahni, Ram Chand, had accompanied Hari Singh when he ran away from Kashmir. Survivors believe that he was actively involved in the massacre and had forewarned one of his Muslim employees to flee as there would be “a big *rola* (riot) tomorrow”. Jamal ud Din, 80, of Chhenai who had seen those terrible times, says that the *raja* later died a miserable death as he was afflicted with a disease that grew worms on his body. The body was washed away by flash flood when it lay on the pyre for last rites.[xxxix]

Chenahni was also the scene of another spine chilling incident in which the family of Qazis allegedly slaughtered their womenfolk to save their honour. Six ladies of the household including young girls were slayed by their own kin before the rioters broke into the house with the evil intention of defiling the women but finding them dead, they killed the two men.[xl] The family had earlier fled Chhenani fearing trouble but had been recalled by killers on the assurance that they will not be harmed. Only four families survived the carnage in Chhenani. Mohammad Mukhtar and Nizam ud Din converted to Hinduism for fear of life but returned to their faith once peace was restored.

In Katua district Hindus were in majority with the highest preponderance in tehsil Basohli. The total Muslim population in the district was over 45,000 with the largest and the smallest

minority in Kathua and Basohli tehsils, respectively where they suffered organized violence. Near Kathua town, as many as 8000 Muslims were massacred on October 20th 1947 and only 40 survived in the carnage.[xli] In Billawar area Muslims were killed and womenfolk raped and abducted by Hindu communalists.[xlii] Many fled to Doda side from Machedi and other areas.

Obaidur-Rehman of Basohli town who was an employee of the revenue department was on tour outside the town when rioters attacked Muslims there. There was a *mohalla* of Kashmiri shawl workers whose inhabitants were slaughtered. In Obaid's own *mohalla* everyone was killed including fifteen members of his family and ten of his father-in-law's family. One day local Hindus told Muslims that since riots had started in Jammu it might not take long for flames to reach Basohli and before that happened they must go down the hill and cross the Ravi River for safety. As the Muslims gathered in large numbers and were crossing the river the rioters, mostly non-locals, attacked them. Obaid believes that about 500 people of all ages were butchered in the river in which not much water flowed those days.[xliii] After coming to know about the massacre Obaid fled to Bhaderwah and returned only after a year to see that houses of Muslims had been razed to ground on the directions of Tehsildar of Basohli, Pandit Yog Dayan, in a bid to remove any evidence of their ever having lived there.

Violence in Jammu district affected all its four tehsils – R. S. Pura, Akhnoor, Samba and Jammu. Of the total population (431,362) of the district, Hindus were in a significant majority at 248,173 (57%) while Muslims accounted for 170,789 (39%) [Census of 1941].

In the border tehsil of R S Pura where Hindus only slightly exceeded Muslims [46,275 Hindus against 45,949 Muslims, Census of 1941] the latter suffered heavy casualties. The attackers were mostly Sikh refugees from Pakistan and local lower caste Hindus. The village of Darsopur where Muslims were in 70% majority was gripped with tension. They had gathered at a place where rioters attacked them. A survivor of the carnage and former legislator, Chowdhary Fateh Muhammad, recalls:

“There was a massacre of Muslims. The attack was made during the day. The tragedy befell our relatives also and there were families in which two to four members each were killed.”[xliv]

Ch. Fateh Muhammad

Chowdhary's grandparents and paternal aunts were also killed while his mother and sister were separated from him in the melee. He was rescued by a Hindu, Shankar Das, who accompanied him to the border for cross over to Pakistan where he lived for some years only to return in 1953 after undergoing a jail term for suspicion of being an Indian agent. Chowdhary does not remember the date of the massacre but recalls that it was October as “crops in the fields had ripened.”

In Akhnoor tehsil, where the population of Hindus and Muslims stood at 55,325 and 32,611, respectively, as many as 15,000 Muslims were reportedly done to death on October

20.[xlv] Violence was also reported from other parts of the tehsil including Chhamb, Deva Batala and Manawar. The Samba massacre on October 22 accounted for 14,000 Muslim victims.[xlvi] The tehsil had a Muslim population of 35,642 as against Hindu majority of 51,479.

Elsewhere in Jammu Province, Bhaderwah, Kishtwar and Doda also witnessed violence.[xlvii] In Doda, family of Sheikh Abdur Rehman, who is now a senior Bahujan Samaj Party leader, was killed. Those who wanted an anti-Muslim flare up there had spread a false rumour that Muslims in Doda had revolted, killed Hindus and coronated one Khalil Kitchloo as their king. “Those days wherever the Dogra army men would go they spread such rumours about the place which was followed by a massacre of Muslims.”[xlviii]

JAMMU CITY, CONSPIRACY AND CARNAGE

The stories of violence in other parts of the Province were pouring into Jammu City and tension was building up among its Muslim inhabitants. With a total number of 15,920, they were in a clear minority against a population of 30,564 Hindus [Census of 1941]. Gripped with fear, *they* were scared of venturing out. In *mohalla* Jatkanian, the inhabitants demolished the walls that divided their houses to go from one to another without stepping outside.[xlix] The communalists from the majority community had vitiated the atmosphere and flamed passions. Injured refugees from Pakistan were being paraded in the streets of the city to arouse tempers against Muslims. Ved Bhasin believes that Jammu politics in 1947 was totally divided on communal lines. There was no mixing up of the two communities and politically Hindus and Muslims were at daggers drawn. Meanwhile, Maharaja Hari Singh and his wife arrived from Srinagar where they had to flee in the face of the Tribal attack. The arrival in Jammu of a defeated and psychologically wounded royal couple added fuel to the fire that had been already lit by communal forces in the wake of the creation of the Islamic Republic of Pakistan next door and arrival of Hindu migrants from there. Advocate Salahria recalls:

“In the meantime, the Maharaja also had to flee from Srinagar and he came here. His wife came out on streets wailing with dishelved hair and saying to people that Muslims had dethroned them. The Maharaja’s army had also returned defeated from Poonch, Rajouri, Newshehra and Kashmir and was nursing a grudge against Muslims. All this contributed to a situation where Muslims of Jammu suffered devastation.”[l]

Until middle of October, there was relative peace in Jammu City though killing of rural Muslims and their migration to Pakistan was underway.[li] In the outskirts of the city scared people were fleeing to Pakistan in groups and carrying even their cattle with them. They would be waylaid by rioters and killed. The growing tension forced people within the city also to migrate to Pakistan and in the beginning the middle class families set out on this path. Others were also waiting in the wings but Pakistan suddenly stopped rail service to Jammu, ostensibly to pressurize the Maharaja to immediately decide on the future of Jammu & Kashmir.

The rioters laid siege of the Muslim dominated areas of Talab Khatikan, Dalpatianin and Mohalla Afghana and attacked them. There was firing for about 5-6 days but the rioters did not dare to enter the Muslim congested areas, for there were some young Muslims whose presence in the area would deter attackers from taking such a step. The besieged Muslims were in desperation as every moment they feared attack on their houses. “Many families prepared poison drinks for their women and children so that they should die with their honour intact instead of falling into the hands of Hindu marauders.”[lii] At Masatgarh, Ata Muhammad slaughtered his two teenage daughters with a knife to save their honour from the attacking mob.[liii] The house of General Samandar Khan of the Dogra Army and uncle of former Air Chief Marshal of Pakistan, Asghar Khan, in *Mohalla* Dalpatian was the last refuge of the besieged Muslims where they held positions.[liv] Captain Nasiruddin who had earlier worked in the political department in Gilgit assumed the political command.[lv]

The Muslim dominated areas were denied water supply and foodgrains. There was complete nexus between the marauders, the administration and the army. Hindus had taken up positions on their houses situated at the border line of Lakhdatta Bazar and Peer Mitha. They were later joined by troops from Patiala Army which was already in Jammu before the Accession and built bunkers in the houses of Hindus. The troopers who had come to protect the Muslims in Talab Khatikan and Urdu Bazar (now Rajinder Bazar) actually opened fire on them. Advocate Salahria’s brother Naseer Ahmad was one among the victims.

Raja Sohbat Ali Khan’s heroics during that awful time are now part of the folklore of Jammu. Khan who came from Mirpur in western Jammu Province, now in Pakistan Administered Jammu & Kashmir, was an exemplary police officer feared by criminals. During the time of violence he was incharge of Thana Gumat in Jammu City. He would rush with his contingent to any spot where he heard there was a riot, arrest the culprits and parade them through the city roads. As long as he was around Muslims of the city slept peacefully at night.[lvi] One day he was called to the residence of a Superintendent of Police near Tawi River. Suddenly he heard screams of women and children and the sound of gunfire as if people were being killed around the Tawi. He had no arms with him and snatched a gun from a guard outside the Superintendent of Police’s residence and ran in the direction of the gunfire. “Word spread quickly that Raja was fighting a large number of Hindus single-handed. Every Muslim in the city who heard the report began to pray for Raja’s safety.”[lvii] He was killed fighting the marauders. As the news reached there a pal of gloom fell on the Muslim localities of the city. His bullet riddled body was later recovered from the river by a group of youth who buried it with bare hands. Raja Sohbat Ali’s and Raja Sarwar Khan’s killing “adversely affected the atmosphere in Mirpur”[lviii] where Hindus had to migrate in the face of attacks on them and their property.

In the prevailing tension all kinds of rumours were spread about Muslims getting armed and attacking Hindus. This was done with a purpose and to justify what happened later. The administration imposed curfew in the city but it was meant only for Muslim population. Hindus, especially the rioting mobs, moved about freely in streets under the full gaze of the army. Ved Bhasin recalls:

“The houses of Hindus in Kachhi Chhawani were used as arms dumps from where rioters would come out, board jeeps and roam in the city. The convoys of RSS activists would start from the house of Prem Nath Dogra, the *Praja Parishad* chief. Some Sikh refugees also joined them. They moved freely from lane to lane massacring people.”[lix]

The administration ran a training camp at Rehari where Hindus and Sikhs were imparted training in use of firearms. Ved Bhasin, who was advised by Chet Ram Chopra to send his volunteers for arms training instead of working for peace, and Balraj Puri sent two of their men to the camp to see what was happening there and they saw the army training RSS youth to use 303-rifles. On the one hand Hindus and Sikhs were given arms training and on the other Muslims were ordered to deposit with the government whatever arms they possessed and the administration demobilised a large number of Muslim soldiers in the State army as well as the Muslim police officers whose loyalty it suspected. “Hindus and Sikhs were apparently given weapons taken from Muslims disarmed by the Maharaja’s forces. These weapons were then used against Muslims.”[lx]

As Muslims in the city lay besieged, the administration acted upon a well thought of plan to bring them out and deal with them. On November 5 the government asked the besieged Muslims to assemble at the Police Lines at Jogi Gate for transporting them to Pakistan as there was ‘danger to their lives in Jammu’. Captain Nasiruddin took the bait of Governor Chet Ram Chopra.[lxi] Only a day earlier, Indian Home Minister, Vallabhbhai Patel, Defence Minister, Sardar Baldev Singh and Maharaja of Patiala visited Jammu and had a meeting with Hari Singh.[lxii] In the absence of any material evidence it is difficult to establish a connection between the two developments but the fact remains that the visit happened only 24 hours prior to the fateful day of November 5.

Muslims of the city assembled at the Police Lines. Vehicles were arranged for their transportation and the first batch comprising several hundreds was huddled in about 40 to 60 lorries on November 5. The lorries were escorted by the army but suddenly diverted from the road to Sialkot towards Digiana where troopers, and armed *jathas* were waiting for them. Passengers were dragged out of the lorries and killed. The soldiers either joined the killers in the carnage or simply looked the other way while slaughter was on. Among massacred was the family of Mehboob-ul-Haq, later Pakistan’s Finance Minister and famous economist. One of the survivors was the daughter of prominent leader of Muslims, Chowdhary Ghulam Abbas, who was abducted and later recovered.

Another survivor was Dr. Abdul Karim who was pulled out of the lorry and seriously injured. As many as 30 members of his family were shot dead before his eyes. He was told that his life was spared and if he had the courage he must go to Pakistan and weep for his entire life but if he could not make it there vultures will have a doctor’s meat to feast on.[lxiii] He was made to stand up facing Pakistan and kicked in the back. An injured Karim somehow reached Sialkot. Mai Malan of Dalpatian also went through this ordeal and managed to reach Pakistan along with her two sons and daughter-in-law where her younger son, Ikram ul Haque, later became a noted teacher of physics and then a councillor in Pakistan Embassy in Austria.

At the carnage site, blood stains on the lorries were washed before sending them back to the Police Lines. As the lorries arrived there earlier than one could have expected these to return from the border, Shabir Ahmad Salahria, then 13 years old, was waiting for his turn along with his parents and brothers to be transported to Pakistan the next day. He suspected that some thing was wrong as vehicles could not have returned from the border so soon. Word was spread at the Police Lines camp that those who had left for Pakistan in the morning had safely reached there. Nobody at the camp knew the reality. They were waiting for the morning to board the lorries for their journey to safety. Next morning, the action was re-played. There were more people in the lorries than on the previous day.

Among the ill-fated passengers on the second day, besides Salahrias, was Abdul Aziz Bhat, Head Master of Hari Singh High School and later Registrar of Jammu & Kashmir University, his young wife and two little daughters aged two and a half years and six months. The vehicles were again diverted towards Samba instead of driving straight to Sialkot. Those who were familiar with the route asked the reason and were told that there was some problem on that side and hence the alternate route was taken. The diversion was according to the plan. As the vehicles covered some distance the passengers saw armed gangs on prowl who immediately attacked the lorries. They killed them in hundreds and looted whatever jewellery the women possessed. Reflecting on the tragedy befallen on him Bhat recalls:

“I had my eldest daughter, Masooda, in my lap while my wife was holding the infant. As I came down, somebody shouted ‘fire’. A bullet hit me in the hand as I was holding Masooda close to my chest. I saw blood flowing on my clothes but had no idea what had happened. Masooda did not cry or make a movement. There was a canal where surviving helpless women had collected and taken shelter in the water. My wife was one among them. As she saw me she came forward and took the child from me. She noticed that Masooda was dead and her intestines had come out of her tiny body. The innocent little girl had been martyred. The bullet severing my left hand thumb had pierced her body and the poor child, without a moan or cry, had died on the spot.”[lxiv]

There was no burial of the dead. The corpses lay scattered all over the area. Broken with pain and grief, Bhat slipped the body into the canal to give innocent Masooda her funeral in water. There was no count of the dead. Bhat recalls having seen among the slain Professor Umar Din who taught Persian at the Prince of Wales College, Jammu.

Shabir Salahria was pulled out of the lorry by an attacker. He ran for cover behind adjacent high grass but was dragged out by a soldier who wanted to shoot him. In the meanwhile, a gang of rioters armed with swords and spears attacked him. He sustained grievous injuries in arm, head and back and fell unconscious. The attackers took him for dead. He regained consciousness at about noon and saw two of his neighbours among the scattered corpses. His two younger brothers, Nazir Ahmad and Salahuddin, had also survived but his parents had been killed. He estimates about 600 to 700 people being killed in the carnage that day.

In Jammu City, Ustad Mohalla more or less remained untouched by violence although attempts were made to harm Muslim inhabitants. A local wealthy Hindu, Bakshi Hardat, posted his armed men in the lanes to thwart attempts by rioters to attack Muslims.[lxv] The

attackers were repulsed and the situation saved. Prem Nath Dogra, leader of the Hindu communal party, *Praja Parishad*, himself lived in the area and did not want the situation there to get out of hand.[lxvi]

ABDUCTION OF WOMEN

Apart from killing tens of thousands of people and forcing even a larger number to migrate to Pakistan, an unspecified number of Muslim women was abducted from different parts of Jammu Province. Most of them were not returned to their families and in many cases Hindus and Sikhs forcibly married them. The abducted women were raped and smuggled out to different parts of India. Although the number of such unfortunate victims will be never known there are some estimates which say that 25,000 women were abducted from Jammu Province. However, Muhammad Yusuf Saraf considers this figure on the higher side and “a liberal estimate”.[lxvii]

The Muslim Conference believed 5000 to be a rough estimate of the abducted women.[lxviii] Many of these unfortunate victims were recovered later. Sheikh Muhammad Abdullah’s deputy, Bakhshi Ghulam Muhammad, who became Prime Minister of the Indian Administered Jammu & Kashmir in 1953 after Abdullah was deposed and imprisoned, is credited with recovering many women from their tormentors. “He would personally enter into the houses of the Hindu Rajputs, recover abducted Muslim girls and arrange their safe dispatch to Pakistan to join their kith and kin.”[lxix] Abdullah’s wife, Begum Akbar Jahan, helped in organizing camps and rehabilitating many rescued women.[lxx]

Among the rescued was the daughter of Chowdhary Ghulam Abbas. She was sent to his father in Pakistan where he and his colleague, Allah Rakha Sagar, had been dispatched by Sheikh Muhammad Abdullah in exchange of Brigadier Gansara Singh and few others. Munilal, a Hindu of Jammu who shared a close relationship with Abbas “played a big part”[lxxi] in the recovery his daughter. Munilal several times visited Abbas in Pakistan and on one such occasion, a sumptuous feast was arranged for him to which legendary cricket players of Pakistan, Hanif Muhammad and his brother, Wazir Muhammad, were also invited.

Abduction of women did not confine to one or two particular areas but happened almost everywhere where Muslims were attacked. On October 22, 1947 when reportedly 14,000 people were massacred in Samba, “all the Muslim women in the village were apparently taken away by the State troops, and the men were slaughtered with the exception of fifteen survivors, who escaped to Sialkot”.[lxxii] Likewise, during the massacre at Maogaon on October 23 in which 25,000 Muslims were slaughtered, their women and all their personal belongings were taken away from them by the Dogra troops.[lxxiii]

Nazir Ahmad of Mohalla Afghanan in the old city of Jammu who was 8 years old saw young Muslim women being dragged by hair out of a camp at Usatad Mohalla, bundled into waiting army trucks and driven to unknown places.[lxxiv] The unfortunate victims had lost their parents, husbands and brothers to carnages. Nazir is 75 today and breaks down while

recounting the horrific incident which is haunting him ever since. The women, who he believes were in hundreds, had been rescued from different areas of Jammu, Kathua and Udhampur districts and were lodged in a camp from where they were forcibly lifted and smuggled, possibly, to Punjab. In many cases, Sheikh Mohammad Abdullah squarely blames the RSS activists under Prem Nath Dogra for kidnaping Muslim women from such camps.[lxxv]

The story of Razia Begum, daughter of Chowdhary Abdullah Khan of Chak Jafar village in Mishriwalla, Akhnoor Tehsil of Jammu district is one of the umpteen shocking tales of that period.[lxxvi] Her father was a Member of the *Praja Sabha* (Assembly) under Maharaja Hari Singh's rule. Razia was married in Darsopur village of Miran Sahab few months before anti-Muslim violence broke out in Jammu and was 15-16 years old. Her grand father-in-law, grand mother-in-law and one brother-in-law were killed in violence. When Muslims of the area were gripped with fear the head of her family gave his womenfolk in the custody of a Hindu acquaintance who betrayed him and handed over the women, including Razia, to rioters.

The women were herded to a factory at Miran Sahab and then taken away by rioters. A man came with a gun and took Razia to his home. He was already married and his parents asked him either to drop the lady where he had picked her from or kill her. He did neither and instead took Razia to his sister's place but his parents objected to this upon which he took her to his friend, Thakur Balwan Singh. He told Balwan, a widower, to shelter Razia for a few days after which he will rent a house in Jammu City and keep her.

Balwan abducted Razia to Punjab and forcibly married her. He kept on changing locations for fear of Razia being traced and recovered as many such Muslim ladies were later. He had three children with her including two daughters and a son and passed away in Punjab in 1965. After Balwan's death Razia returned to Jammu along with her children. On her return she was pregnant with her third child. One day in 1974, when she was in the Deputy Commissioner's office in connection with some land related matter she saw her sister-in-law [her Muslim husband's sister] but did not muster courage to meet her. On her next visit to the Deputy Commissioner's office she gathered herself and knocked the door of the house and went inside. Her sister-in-law, Zainab, recognized her only by her voice.

Meanwhile, Razia's husband from her first marriage had remarried. On Zaina's insistence, she shifted to Dalpatian and took her two daughters along. Her son, now a young man of 26, did not accompany her. The eldest daughter, previously Reva Rani, was given a Muslim name as well as the second daughter who was born in Jammu. Razia's elder daughter was married with Zainab's son in 1979 and is happily living as a practicing Muslim. Currently, she is translating the Quran into Dogri language and has already completed 20 of the 30 chapters. After her daughter's marriage, Razia along with her younger daughter went to Pakistan where her parents had migrated to in the wake of massacres. Her father had expired by then and her mother and brother persuaded her to stay with them. Her elder daughter visited her mother and sister several times in Sialkot and is in touch with her brother in Jammu who did not convert and has two children. Razia passed away in 1999.

DEMOGRAPHY CHANGED

Those who planned and executed massacres and forced migration of Muslims had succeeded in their design. The demography of post-1947 Jammu Province was significantly changed. In areas where Muslims were in majority they were reduced to negligible minority and there were villages which remained uninhabited for years. The fall in the proportion of Muslim population was phenomenal in urban areas compared to rural areas. In urban Udhampur district we see a fall of 1757 per 10,000 (17.57%) from 2252 in 1941 to only 495 in 1961.[lxxvii] (No census was conducted in India in 1951) In urban Jammu district, the fall was recorded by 1781 per 10,000 (17.81%) from 3213 in 1941 to 1432 in 1961. The urban Kathua ditriect represented a worse scenario with Muslim population ratio decreasing by 2887 per 10,000 (28.87%) from 3114 in 1941 to only 227 in 1961. The rural Jammu district was the worst hit. The proportion of Muslim population here fell by 2972 per 10,000 (29.72%) between 1941 and 1961.

The Census Report of 1961 gives a fair clue of “the phenomenal fall in the rural population of Muslim Community in Jammu district during the last two decades [1941-1961] as a result of the mass migration to Pakistan of most of the Muslims who inhabited the various tehsils of the district.” According to the Report, the total population of Muslims in the district as a whole, as returned at the 1961 Census, is about one-third of what it was in 1941. In figures, it would mean that Muslim population in Jammu district had fallen from 160,158 in 1941 to 51,847 in 1961. In Jammu City, the fall was recorded by 3,441 person during the same period.

In rural Kathua district the fall in Muslim population was recorded at 1118 per 10,000 (11.18%) during the same period. The Report is silent about Reasi district as by 1961 the administrative units had been reconstituted and it no longer enjoyed the status of a district.

As with the number of massacred Muslims, the number of those who migrated from eastern districts of the erstwhile combined Jammu Province is variedly given by different people. *Towards Azad Kashmir* [Lahore, p 119], published in 1948, gives a figure of 200,000 Muslims migrating to Pakistan “so far”. By late November 1947, “Over 200,000 Jammu refugees had arrived in Sialkot”. [lxxviii] A Pakistani Government publication of 1952 [Gurmani M. A., *Kashmir: A Survey*, p 7] estimates the number to a high of 600,000. An article published in the *Dawn* on January 2nd 1951 [quoted by Snedden] gives the total number of migrants as 500,000 who were believed to have arrived in Pakistan in ‘three waves’ of migration between October 1947 and early 1949. Most of the Jammu refugees settled in Sialkot.[lxxix] The migrants also included those who left for Pakistan out of their choice and also those who were forced by the ruling National Conference activists to migrate. A correct figure of the migrants, as of the massacred people, is hard to be arrived at.

Change in the demography of Jammu Province can further be appreciated by the Section on ‘Uninhabited Villages’ in the Census Report of 1961:

“... a large number of villages which were well inhabited till 1947 were completely depopulated consequent upon the migration of their population to West Pakistan and to the State territory on the other side of the Cease-Fire Line [now Line of Control]. Thus, while the number of uninhabited villages in Jammu district was only 13 both in 1941 and 1961, as many as 155 inhabited villages were completely deserted as a result of mass migration. In Kathua district also, the number of uninhabited villages had risen from 7 of 1941 to 43 in 1961. The latter include, among others, 31 depopulated villages.”

Could the government have arrested migration of Muslims to Pakistan? Expecting such an attempt on part of the Maharaja's administration would be naive as it was actively involved in violence and changing the demographic character of the Province. However, when power was 'transferred to people' and Sheikh Muhammad Abdullah was made the Emergency Administrator the new dispensation too did not do any thing tangible towards this end. In fact, two of the three major waves of migration took place while Abdullah had already stepped in. He was accused of encouraging migration of Jammu Muslims and in many cases he and his National Conference activists were blamed for forcing or pushing political opponents across the border. Balraj Puri, though, believes that Abdullah could not do anything as there was diarchy and Mehar Chand Mahajan was in real control in Jammu.

Shabir Ahmad Salahria is not as charitable. According to him Sheikh Muhammad Abdullah believed that it was good if Muslims of Jammu migrated to Pakistan and in fact, a few thousands of them who had fled to Kashmir too were deported by him. Krishan Dev Sethi makes a serious allegation against Abdullah:

“Sheikh Muhammad Abdullah could have arrested the migration of Muslims from Jammu but he did not. Apparently, he tried for it but not as much as he should have. I and Moti Ram Begra, who was later Member of the Indian Constituent Assembly, went to him and requested him to stop the migration. We told him that if this was not done the demography of Jammu will be changed. Sheikh Muhammad Abdullah retorted, “*Jammu ke musalmanu ne mujhay kab leader mana hai*”? (Muslims of Jammu never recognized me as their leader).”[lxxx]

According to Ved Bhasin when after the riots, Abdullah ,as head of the Emergency Administration, arrived in Jammu he was shown documentary evidence of involvement of the administration and RSS activists but instead of proceeding against the killers he tried to appease the Hindu communalists. “I do not know why but perhaps his feeling was that the Muslims in Jammu were not his supporters”, says Bhasin. Wazira Begum too believes that Abdullah cared less about the plight of Muslims of Jammu for “they did not recognise him as their leader.”[lxxxi] Two other eyewitnesses, Om Chopra, 95, of Purani Mandi who now resides at Trikuta Nagar and Sudhir Kumar Sharma, 84, of Residency Road hold that Abdullah did not act when on his arrival as Head of the Administration at Jammu he was asked to stop violence against Muslims.[lxxxii]

Sheikh Muhammad Abdullah himself holds a different view. According to him the remainder of Muslims who survived the massacre wanted to go to Pakistan after what they had undergone in Jammu. He tried to dissuade them from migration and offered them every

help for their resettlement but they thought their remedy was in reaching Sialkot. Their desire to migrate to Pakistan was “respected and they were boarded in lorries and sent across the border through Suchetgarh.”[lxxxiii]

The violence in Jammu Province consumed tens of thousands of people, hundreds of thousands were driven out, women were abducted and raped and habitations torched and looted. All this happened and not a single FIR was lodged nor any enquiry ordered into the systematically executed carnages. Sheikh Muhammad Abdullah is believed to have attempted an enquiry against Mehar Chand Mahajan and Maharaja Hari Singh but the initiative was allegedly scuttled by Jawaharlal Nehru.[lxxxiv] According to Muhammad Yusuf Saraf, Abdullah had started collecting evidence against the duo to prove their complicity in the genocide. Notwithstanding Saraf’s assertion, Abdullah remained in power for six years post-November 1947 but nothing is known about any official attempt to enquire one of the most gruesome man-made tragedies of our times nor does he give any idea in his autobiography, *Aatashe-i-Chinar*, about such an attempt.

Abdullah’s successors also slept over the matter as if nothing had happened during those bloody months of 1947. In fact, many of those who had soaked their hands in the blood of Muslims were rewarded by the Government. *Tehsildar* Chander Udhay Singh who supervised massacre at Ram Nagar was placed under suspension by Sheikh Muhammad Abdullah but was subsequently reinstated by Bakhshi Ghulam Mohammad. Some of those who led riots in Udhampur and Bhaderwah later joined the National Conference with some even serving as ministers. The RSS head, Chuni Lal Kotwal, became a minister in Bakshi’s regime. So did Amarnath Sharma of Udhampur.[lxxxv]

Dr. Karan Singh, who was appointed as the Regent in 1949 – after his father, Hari Singh, stepped down as the ruler – and later served as the *Sadr-i-Riyasat* and Governor of Jammu & Kashmir for a long time, maintains screaming silence over the massacres. This writer approached him in December 2011 and February 2012 with a questionnaire regarding his father’s alleged role in the massacre of Muslims and his own silence on the subject but did not get any answer. A request for an interview was also not acceded to. “What would Karan Singh say? His father was involved in the massacre”, observed Sethi when asked why the Heir Apparent chose to avoid these questions.[lxxxvi]

Queries under the Right to Information Act by the present author seeking information about the number of people killed in and migrating from Jammu in the wake of violence in 1947, role of the administration and if any enquiry was ever conducted or is going to be conducted remained unreplied by the Jammu & Kashmir Government’s General Administration Department, Home Department and the Divisional Commissioner Jammu’s office.

The victims of Jammu carnages still wait, some in body and the rest in soul, for justice which has alluded them all these decades. A Truth & Reconciliation Commission to go into the horrendous events is long overdue and alone could alleviate their pain.

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‘Holocaust of the East, Not Mentioned in Books’

Ather Zia

Forced Erasures

In the old decrepit neighbourhood of Bat’maalyun in Srinagar, mired in the innards of an interdistrict transport hub, a bunch of homes shared a common courtyard. Here amongst the many playing children, a great grandmother would often be found sitting and babbling to herself. As the years increased so did the darkness of her stories. She spoke of glistening swords dripping with blood, slashed necks, stabbing, wounds, and cries of help. As if watching over a grisly scene, she would lament the bodies of those killed. People thought she had gone senile. Other than having some relations in Azad Kashmir and Pakistan, nothing was known about her. She had been married into the family kind enough to accept the poor orphaned girl from Jammu as their daughter in law. Her kin would often chide her for the “horror stories” that scared kids. Her memories were perceived as fictions of an ebbing mind. In reality, for half a century the lady had kept a tight grip on traumatic memories that age was slowly prying out of her. Not that it was common knowledge but she was a survivor of the Jammu pogrom. Even though one of the most brutal pogroms of the modern century, it has been successfully hidden in clear sight by the hegemony occupying the region for seven decades. The Indian apparatus has manufactured the obfuscation and ignorance around the pogrom to engineer, by hook or crook, Kashmir’s future with India. This, while covering up the Hindu fundamentalist militancy and ethnonationalism that lay at the core of the new India. A nation which was eyeing the secularist mantle on the emerging post-colonial stage. The magnitude of the slaughter of Muslims on a mass scale in Jammu between August and November 1947 was a holocaust. Yet, the reported numbers of those who were killed or escaped to Azad Kashmir and Pakistan were mired in debates for decades. A report published in The Times, London, 10 August 1948 mentions “2,37,000 Muslims were systematically exterminated – unless they escaped to Pakistan along the border – by the forces of the Dogra State headed by the Maharaja in person and aided by Hindus and Sikhs.”[1] A common estimate of casualties that lies between 200,000 and 300,000.[2] The Dogra despot ruling the princely state of Jammu and Kashmir, unrelated to Indo-Pak claims, had long been facing challenges from his subjects. There was a strong movement demanding a change to constitutional monarchy and in the Western region of Poonch, a brewing insurrection which later took shape as the Azad (Independent) Kashmir Regular Forces to create an Independent state. Even though the king suppressed the revolt brutally but the rebels successfully liberated part of the region declaring the Azad (Independent) Kashmir provisional government on October 24, 1947. From August 1947 onwards, Hindu fanatics, aided and abetted by royal government forces, started looting and burning down village after village inhabited by Muslim communities – killing, raping, and abducting their women. The ruler was himself seen distributing arms to the Hindu militia. The pogrom ended in the ethnic cleansing of Muslims from the Jammu province. According to the census of 1941, in Jammu Muslims who had been a majority at 61% were reduced to a minority status at 38%. The Dogra ruler oversaw the pogrom to recapture his hegemony, but in the end, he relegated it to the next occupier — India and fled in the night as only a weak tyrant can. The extermination of the majority of the Muslim population would work

in India's favor by tipping the demographic balance towards Hindus, in case the UN-mandated plebiscite was held. India had killed many birds with one stone. The Jammu pogrom was shoved under the carpet. It served the policy of nation-making that India had engineered. Sidelining Jammu pogrom as minor riots and reducing it as part of partition violence, India was free to create the narrative about saving Kashmiris, cast the Poonch uprising as an invasion and not a revolt, make Pakistan appear as the sole aggressor and also tide over the discrepancies of the Maharaja's signing of the treaty of accession with India. India successfully maintained complete silence on the violence of its own military while making the violence by the militia from the North West Frontier Provinces hyper-visible, casting them as "primitive hordes," which is not to exonerate them of their atrocities. The Jammu pogrom not only exterminated the Muslim community from their homeland but also their forced departure from history books. In the competing accounts of the rival nations' exaggerations and judgments about the violence have become the hallmark to the detriment of the human cost involved. In the Indian narratives, histories, renditions and stories, the pogrom is often recorded in passing and rendered in a manner that favours India as a saviour of Kashmiri people. The violence is often uncritically analyzed through the lens of "Indo-Pak" partition violence when a simple unmotivated analysis proves that this was more than just a spontaneous conflagration or a simple communal riot. It had all the features of concerted planning by the Dogra monarchy, their royal allies, the Hindu supremacist RSS militia, and the Sikhs with inbuilt spontaneity that is part of such exterminations.

A survivor of the pogrom, Dr. Khalida Ghousia Akhtar, a mere 10-year-old in 1947, calls it a holocaust of the east, not mentioned in books.[3] The haunting question generated by such an omission and erasure is how does a full-fledged pogrom become a passing footnote in history? What forces manufacture and impose silence over people who have not only been wounded but continue to bleed in plain sight? And how do people stay silent, or do they ever?

Raw Wounds

An octogenarian, Amanullah Khan Naqshbandi, recounts his terror-filled experience of the pogrom as an 8-year-old. Communal strife had long been a feature of Muslim and Dogra Hindu life in Jammu, but it worsened as events around the creation of India and Pakistan cast their shadow on the region. The news of attacks on Muslims had begun increasing post-August 1947, and the prospect of migrating to Pakistan became real. The local Muslim leaders at the behest of royal authorities asked the community to gather at a public ground from where they would be transported to Sialkot. The first convoy was to leave on November 5. Amanullah, along with his mother and sisters, went in the first batch which mostly consisted of women and children. The men sent their families ahead to safety and intended to join them later. The Muslims genuinely believed that they were being given safe passage to Pakistan.

Amanullah recalls boarding the bus with his family. On the outskirts, the bus veered from the road stopping in the wilderness. The attackers lying in wait fell upon the convoy. Amanullah's mother tried to protect him but found it futile. She urged him to run: "Aman, jump into the canal" she shouted. Amanullah ran. Looking back, he saw blood spurting from

his mother's head. Fatally wounded but even then, she kept shouting for him to run. Too scared to dive into the canal, Amanullah hesitated until a woman pulled him to safety on the other side. Amanullah recalls her as his "angel lady." Seventeen members of Amanullah's family alone including his mother were killed.

Such stories are strewn on both sides of the LoC. Privately mourned and grieved. Even if territories are conquered and public commemorations discouraged, people's memories remain unconquerable. One of the most visible tragic stories of the pogrom belongs to none other than Chowdhary Gulam Abbas the leader of the Muslim conference, a movement against the Dogra regime. Chowdhary's family members were not only killed but also abducted. Dr. Khalida Gousia Akhtar, is the niece of Chowdhary Abbas, a survivor, she now lives in California. Dr. Akhtar has seen the tragedy that befell her uncle from close quarters. The beloved poet, Rasa Javadani's family from Bhaderwah also bore the wounds of the pogrom silently. Known as a poet laureate popular for his songs of loss and love, very few knew about Javadani raising his sister's daughter Tahira Sultana as his own. Javadani's sister had been a 17-year-old new mother when her husband Umar-u-Din, a Professor of Persian in Jammu was killed in the pogrom. In an investigative feature, journalist Bilal Handoo pieces together the life of a young professor talking to his daughter Tahira Sultana about the letters he had written to his wife. Each missive is a historic document that allows a peek into the very heart of the pogrom. In moments reflecting eternal love, the young husband would mention his wait for the sweater his wife was knitting for him; which he never got to wear.[4] A deeply religious man with unwavering faith in God, the professor's letters give voice to the growing fear in the Muslim community, he states: "Jammu's mood is murderous." His letters become a countdown to the inching pogrom as he speaks of curfews, people fleeing, the apathy of Sheikh Abdullah, and the bloodthirsty heavily armed Dogra army. The good professor soon realizes that he cannot return home and decides to go to Sialkot. A witness told the family that the professor was last seen guiding a group of panicked women on how to save themselves. Ironically, he was stabbed in the back by his own student and his body was thrown into corpses that had piled in Samba town that day. A tragic figure that surfaces in many oral and several written narratives are that of a girl named Suraiya. Proving that institutional archives are always at the mercy of people's memory, Suraiya's existence rises like a phoenix, a testament to the pogrom and its aftermath. In an essay, Anuradha Bhasin, a journalist, and activist from Jammu recounts the beginnings of her own political consciousness with the figure of Suraiya. Bhasin recalls: "Bright flowery printed salwar kameez on her slightly plump frame, black Bata school shoes, and plaited, oiled jet-black hair that ended in bloodred, thick nylon ribbons, dilated pupils, slurring lips slightly frothy, twigs in hand—this image of Suraiya is one of the most defining ones from my childhood in Jammu." Known in the locality as Suraiya Pagaal(crazy), she was the living face of the Jammu pogrom. Suraiya had seen her entire family being burnt alive; with her and her mother the only survivors. Bhasin adds: "After that, she had lost her mental balance. While my generation was growing up, Suraiya's story was not unique; there were many such around us, whose faces spoke of the bloodied streets of Jammu. It was easy to stumble on these narratives in a neighbourhood that had once had a huge Muslim population, one that had thinned drastically in October-November 1947." Qazi Zaid, a Kashmiri journalist

also writes about Suraiya, who with time had become a fixture not just with the people of Jammu but also from the valley who would go for Darbar move.”[5]

In 2003 Ved Bhasin, a veteran journalist gave an open testimony of the Jammu pogrom in a public gathering mapping how the nexus between the Dogra ruler, RSS, and the Indian government produced a perfect genocidal crime – one that was committed and omitted from memory. In recent years, the resurrection of the people’s history in face of institutional erasure signals the coming of age of “history” consciousness in the Kashmiri people. Kashmiris are increasingly culling their native history from the hegemonic narratives that favour India’s imperial project in Kashmir. In the context of the Jammu pogrom, academic research by native scholars has always been done in some measure, and often to cull it from the obfuscation of partition narrative.[6]

Reclaiming Memory

In the last 70 years, the Indian narrative has dominated the explanations of the Kashmir dispute and the events of 1947 and after. The Indian mainstream narrative around Kashmir’s contested accession starts without blinking an eye, and seamlessly jumps from the “dilemma” of the Hindu Dogra despot about whether to join Pakistan or India or to stay Independent to “Pathan tribesmen aided by Pakistan” and then to Indian army “presented as heroic” rushing to save “a divided Kashmir for India.”[7]Period.

The invisibility of the Jammu pogrom is deliberately woven into Indian politics. The historiography supporting the nation-making was fine-tuned to cast India as the saviour of Kashmir and in this the Kashmiri client-politicians of the time were complicit. After the pogrom, Sheikh Abdullah and Jawahar Lal Nehru together brushed aside the pogrom as mere “tragic events” in Jammu. Sheikh Abdullah went to the extent of blaming the victims for inviting the terror because they sided with Pakistan. On the other hand, to her credit, in the aftermath, Sheikh’s wife Begum Akbar Jahan took up the mantle of rehabilitating the women survivors. Sheikh Abdullah in due course did express some regret if not remorse when the Hindu fanatic heat was fully turned on him. He began to realize the duplicitous policy India was playing but it was too little too late. As Kashmiris like to say, he had by then sold his soul to the devil. India deposed and disposed of him, like used yarn soon after.

Today even as history consciousness has grown in Kashmiris and is finding expression, the exacting Indian occupation is mounting new technologies of erasure. Post-August 5th, 2019, the Indian government is not only violating Kashmir’s territorial sovereignty and domicile laws but also its language and history. Included in the array of enforced changes that the direct rule from Delhi has imposed, are new public holidays marking the despot Maharaja Hari Singh’s birthday and October 26, the day the Indian army annexed Kashmir. Both of these days are markers of subjugation, occupation, and humiliation for Kashmiris. These rulings add salt to the wounds of Kashmiris; they become painful reminders of the settler-colonial policies they are facing.

In face of such imperial erasures, the memory becomes an urgent duty. The pogrom must be “reclaimed,” if only to save it from erasure. It is not reclamation for sadistic reliving of

the genocidal murder and mayhem but to affirm that the memory and martyrdom of those killed and who survived. To reclaim the pogrom means to restore the humanity of the people made invisible by death and humiliation. At the same time, it entails understanding that without resurrecting the event of this catastrophic magnitude in its proper historical context there can be no true understanding of Kashmiri resistance and how to dismantle the disingenuous Indian narrative and its military occupation. And to make sure no one's perceived as fictions of an ebbing mind.

[1] There is some confusion about the newspaper not being published on the date which occurs in some accounts as 10 October 1948 as mentioned by Christopher Snedden. Ilyas Chattha clarifies saying the report about the 1947 Jammu events was in The Times issue of 10 August 1948.

[2] See Anuradha Bhasin Jamwal, *Prejudice in Paradise, Communalism Combat*, Vol 11, 2005; Ilyas Chattha, *Partition, and Locality: Violence, Migration, and Development in Gujranwala and Sialkot 1947-1961*. OUP Catalogue, 2011. Christopher Snedden, *Kashmir: The Unwritten History*, Harper Collins India, 2011; Arjun Appadurai & Arien Mack *India's world: The politics of creativity in a globalized society*. New Delhi: Rain Tree (Rupa), 2012; Iffat Rashid, *Theatrics of a 'Violent State' or 'State of Violence': Mapping Histories and Memories of Partition in Jammu and Kashmir*, *South Asia: Journal of South Asian Studies*, 43:2, 2020

[3] Oral history with Khalida Ghousia Akhtar, 2016 February 25. The 1947 Partition Archive: Survivors and their Memories. Stanford Libraries.

https://exhibits.stanford.edu/1947-partition/catalog?f%5Bauthor_person_facet%5D%5B%5D=Akhtar%2C+Khalida+Ghousia%2C+1937-&f%5Blanguage%5D%5B%5D=Urdu

[4] Bilal Handoo. 1947: The Last Letter. Kashmir Life. 2016 <https://kashmirlife.net/1947-the-last-letter-123112/>

[5] Zaid Qazi, *JammuMassacre@70: The frenzy of Suraiya, and the silence of history*, <https://freepresskashmir.news/2017/11/05/jammumassacre70-the-frenzy-of-suraiya-and-the-silence-of-history/>

[6] Sheikh Showkat Hussain, *Kashmir Profiles*, Dar al Kotob Ilmiyah, Kashmir, 2017

[7] Singh Khushwant, 2008, *Shiekh wanted a neutral Kashmir*, The Tribune <https://www.tribuneindia.com/2008/20081004/saturday/above.htm>



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