

ALL JAMMU AND KASHMIR MUSLIM CONFERENCE

Art is long, life is short. According to this dictum, preservation and salvation of the art of historical significance is prevalent to the tide of time, which in its short span has to accommodate the fathom less pit of history in its timeless fold. This cumbersome and gigantic task, which appears as a mere fiction to the ordinary critic, is entrusted to the erst-while historian of the day for the benefit of the future generations.

The contemplation is justified to an extent that often the researcher comes up with distorted or mutilated versions which have little or no bearings to the actual happenings. It is with this intention that this programme has been formulated to highlight the past and present achievements of the All Jammu and Kashmir Muslim Conference, without which the history of Kashmir would remain wanting and fragmentary. To overcome this enigma, an elucidation of the facts into a comprehensive volume was most essential in order to stem the rot and counter the vehement propaganda against the Freedom Movement in Kashmir. The movement was started by the All Jammu and Kashmir Muslim Conference after its induction as a political platform of the Muslims in August 1932 in Srinagar. Prominent amongst the participants were Sardar Gohar Rehman, Chaudhry Ghulam Abbass, Mistri Yaqoob Ali, Sheikh Ghulam Qadir and Sheikh Mohammed Abdullah. However, Sardar Gohar Rehman favoured the formation of Provincial Muslim Conference in Jammu, but he was prevailed upon by the others to relegate his demand in favour of All Jammu and Kashmir Muslim Conference. As such the first rung of the political ladder was successfully leapt in a unanimous decision in spite of minor differences between the leaders.

To give a flying start to the first ever political endeavour of the Muslims of Jammu and Kashmir, it was essential to remove all the doubts and aversions between the various leaders and bring them into the folds of a common platform. It was an enormous task in the wake of the deep variance in the political thinking of Sheikh Mohammed Abdullah and Mir Waiz Mohammed Yusuf Shah, over the status of the Ahmedis, who had played a vital role in ending the political exile of some of the leaders including Maulana Meerak Shah, Mian Ahmed Yaar and Mufti Ziauddin Zia. However, these people rendered yeoman service towards the success of the Muslim Conference with zeal and devotion in harmony with lawyers, journalists and intellectuals of the calibre of Abdul Majid Salik, Maulana Ghulam Rasul Mehr (Editors daily "*Inqalaab*"), Maulana Syed Habib Shah (Editor daily "*Siyasat*"), Maulana Akhter Ali (Editor daily "*Zimindar*"). Besides the daily "*Alfazal* ", newspaper circulated by the Ahmedis, also played its part in making the bid of the Muslim Conference successful. Nonetheless, Mir Waiz Mohammed Yusuf Shah and his aides parted their ways towards the end of the first session.

INAUGURAL SESSION

In the aftermath of the gatherings convened in the last week of August 1932, in the "Pathar Masjid" (Stone Mosque) of Srinagar, attended by well over sixty thousand Muslims, the dates for the First Session of the Muslim Conference were specified from 15 October to 17 October 1932, at the same venue, later extended by two days to facilitate the completion of pending formalities. Elaborate arrangements were made with a fifteen foot high stage to accommodate the members of the Reception Committee, 200 hundred delegates and one thousand visitors. Besides, loudspeakers were installed at various places and the stage was canopied with a colourful copula (Shamiana). Thousands of enthusiasts were present in the Gallery and on the floor with hardly any space in the Hall. Besides, the area surrounding the stage was also packed to capacity and according to one estimate the crowd was numbered to be around 3 lacs, which is a record for such a gathering in the entire history of the State.

The session commenced in the afternoon of 15 October, with an address of Welcome from Khawaja Ghulam Ahmed Ashai (M.A.) on behalf of the Reception Committee, highlighting the essential affairs and purposes of the establishment of Muslim Conference, laying special emphasis on its being a non-ethnic organisation and that the Muslims were loyal to the Maharaja and the State.

In his Presidential address, Sheikh Mohammed Abdullah, while appreciating the Glancy Commission's Recommendations, bitterly criticised its non implementation by the administration and demanded withdrawal of Ordinances in the Mirpur District along with freedom of the Press and use of the Political Platform. Elaborating, he criticised the set-up of the Proposed Constituent Assembly and demanded restoration of the just rights of the people of Poonch.

To analyse the various proposals under consideration and classify the propositions, three sub-committees comprising of about 50 members were formed. During the course of the session, about ten propositions presented before the committees, were all accepted unanimously keeping in view the urgency of their nature. Similarly the constitution of the Muslim Conference was also passed and Sheikh Mohammed Abdullah was elected as the President, Sheikh Abdul Majeed (Advocate) as Vice President and Chaudhry Ghulam Abbass as General Secretary. In addition four Secretaries were also elected including Maulvi Abdur Rahim Vakeel, Mian Ahmed Yar, Mr. Abdul Hakeem and Mr. Ghulam Ahmed.

In his concluding address at the end of the session, Sheikh Mohammed Abdullah stressed the need for unity and amity in a cordial atmosphere. After hectic activity spread over five days, the Inaugural session of the Muslim Conference ended on a happy note and peaceful dispersion of the participants.

One of the aspects of criticism about this session is that " All's well that ends well ", as is clear from the fact that the main objectives before it were sidelined and those with a lesser propinquity were dealt with. Notwithstanding the drawbacks of the convention, it was in itself the greatest achievement towards the emancipation and

unification of a people on one political platform after centuries of persecution and oppression.

DIFFERENCES BETWEEN SHEIKH MOHAMMED ABDULLAH AND MAULANA MUHAMMAD YOUSAF

The gap of differences between Sheikh Mohammed Abdullah and Mir Waiz Maulana Mohammed Yousaf Shah had already widened and they had parted ways at the end of the Inaugural session. To add fuel to the fire, Maulana Muhammad Yousaf Shah delivered some adverse speeches at a number of places at the behest of some vested interests. Sheikh Abdullah's stance was that initially the movement should be restricted for the restoration of the political rights of the people without taking into consideration the quantum of sacrifices required for the purpose. But Mir Waiz Maulana Mohammed Yousaf Shah remained adamant with the backing of some indiscreet vested elements, laying emphasis on the points of leadership and guidance thereby giving vent to the pivotal role which the Ahmedis had assumed in the affairs of the Muslim Community amidst the growing tension between the various factions and schools of thought prevalent in Kashmir. Despite best efforts, on the part of some Muslim leaders, the ever widening gap of differences between Sheikh Mohammed Abdullah and Mir Waiz Mualana Mohammed Yousaf Shah could not be narrowed. Instead it escalated beyond control in the wake of some extremely vehement rumours and counter claims on both sides culminating in a war of personality cult. Both parties down sizing each other in a war of wits.

However, the fate of any cordial relationships between the two leaders was sealed when on 30 January, 1933, Mir Waiz Maulana Mohammed Yousaf Shah, announced in a huge gathering that Sheikh Mohammed Abdullah was a confirmed Mirzai or a Qadiani and that he had taken an enormous amount from the Qadiani Khalifa Mirza Bashiruddin Mehmood to propagate the cause of the Qadianis. This statement provoked the supporters of Sheikh Mohammed Abdullah, who created a law and situation and the police force had to be called in. The fact of this close financial collaboration between Sheikh Mohammed Abdullah and the Qadiani Khalifa is an open secret and has certain reservations. Though, Abdul Majid Salik claims that the extent of these close contacts had nothing to do with the principles of Qadianiat, but to support the Movement in Kashmir on the basis of the vast resources at the disposal of the Qadiani Khalifa. This was the reason why sheikh Mohammed Abdullah remained inclined towards the Qadiani Khalifa till the end. However, the truth lays bare the intentions of the Qadianis behind this affluence that they were also preaching the principles of Qadianiat covertly amongst the illiterate Kashmiris, which had alarmed the Muslim leadership, who forced the Qadiani Khalifa to disassociate himself from the Activities of the Kashmir Committee. When Allama Iqbal took up the President ship of the Kashmir Committee, the Qadianis started a propaganda war that the real Kashmir Committee was still functioning under the President ship of the Qadiani Khalifa and the one under the President ship of Allama Iqbal was a separate branch. Another noteworthy aspect was that whenever, Sheikh Mohammed Abdullah felt the need,

he contacted the Qadiani Khalifa instead of Allama Iqbal, which created further doubts about his sincerity. This factional infighting amongst the Muslim leadership did more harm than good to the cause of the Kashmir movement and the efforts of the anti-Islamic and anti-Muslim forces gained momentum and strengthened the hands of the enemy in the wake of rumour spread around by the Premier of Kashmir Hari Kishan Kaul, who very deviously succeeded in trapping Mir Waiz Maulana Mohammed Yousaf by instigating him viciously against Sheikh Muhammad Abdullah that the integrity and honour of his family was at stake due to the popularity and wide public acceptance of Sheikh Muhammad Abdullah. Mir Waiz Maulana Muhammad Yousaf readily believed in the hearsay and credulously fell for the trap, thus closing all doors of cooperation and dashing any hopes for unity.

FORMATION OF AZAD MUSLIM CONFERENCE.

Notwithstanding the popularity of Sheikh Muhammad Abdullah and unable to bear the circumstances in fear of the rumour spread by Premier Hari Kishan Kaul, Mir Waiz Muhammad Yousaf Shah wantonly established Azad Muslim Conference in opposition to Sheikh Muhammad Abdullah's All Jammu & Kashmir Muslim Conference. Amongst the stalwarts of the Azad Muslim Conference, were great Kashmiri business men of the like of Sardar Gohar Rehman, A.R.Saghir and Sheikh Ghulam Qadir. Besides, Abdur Rahim Banday, Munshi Asadullah Wakeel, Khizar Muhammad Zoro, Munshi Asadullah Haji (Sookali pura), Ghulam Muhammad Malik al-marroof Mama Barijo played a pivotal role in laying the foundation of Azad Muslim Conference. Abdus Salaam Dallal emerged as the " Lieutenant " of Mir Waiz Muhammad Yousaf Shah. The foundations of this party were laid at the residence of Khawaja Muhammad Abdullah Bassu located at Mehraj Ganj in a meeting of the supporters of Mir Waiz Muhammad Yousaf Shah. Abdus Salaam Parmoo proposed the name "Muslim League ", but after thoughtful consideration, Sufi Ahmed proposed the name " Azad Muslim Conference ", which was seconded by Mir Waiz Muhammad Yousaf Shah and unanimously adopted by the meeting. Thus Azad Muslim Conference came into being. However, it proved short lived and faded into a nonity after its first and only session held under the presidentship of Mir Waiz Maulana Muhammad Yousaf Shah at Srinagar on 1st December, 1933, due to paucity of funds and successful propaganda of the Qadianis against the Movement of the Ahrar.

In his only presidential address, he was skeptical about the role of the Qadianis in undermining the interests of the Kashmiris. He praised the efforts of Allama Iqbal, Khan Bahadur Haji Sheikh Rahim Bakhsh and Sheikh Sadiq Hassan for the Kashmir Movement and thanked them whole heartedly. He was critical of the Recommendations of the Galancy Commission, but submitted its acceptance on the assurance if the government would invest real power in the proposed Constituent Assembly. He proposed that the Ministers would be answerable to the Members of the Assembly and the members would exercise the right of no-confidence against the Ministers. He laid emphasis on the educational, religious and socio-economic

problems being faced by the Muslim Community and stressed for their improvement through the mandate of the Azad Muslim Conference. He categorically denied all superstitions aired by certain quarters regarding his party's manifesto about the status of non-Muslims as unfounded. He was critically apprehensive of the Qadianis and proposed a High level National Conference on the rights of the Non-Muslim minorities. He suggested that the Qadianis be declared as non-Muslims and only the Muslims be preferred for government jobs and other representations.

However, the significant aspect about the differences between these two leaders is that it were the good offices of Mir Waiz Maulana Muhammad Yousaf Shah which played an important part in bringing Sheikh Muhammad Abdullah to the forefront and introduced him to the Kashmiri masses as an up and coming leader. Mir Waiz Maulana Muhammad Yousaf Shah convinced the masses about the veracity of Sheikh Abdullah's leadership and made a fervent appeal to the people in general and the Kashmiri Muslims in particular, to follow the advice of Sheikh Muhammad Abdullah and extend all possible cooperation. The goodwill and cooperation lasted, till the unfortunate parting of ways in 1931. Here the vileness of the hindu mind played its undue role and succeeded in sowing the seeds of discord between the Muslim leadership, which was vying for unification of the Muslims on a single platform. This diverse propensity of the individual Muslim leadership towards socio-political aspect, sapped the political acumen of the Muslim entity as a whole and plunged it into the fathomless pit of anonymity, tightening the noose of slavery and deminishing the hope of emancipation still further. The bane of the Muslim Community was that its leaders could not agree for a unified leadership under the misconception of a swaggering, consequential and vainglorious pride and arrogance. This attitude took its toll and Kashmir the Eden of the Earth in the words of the Philosopher Poet of the East Allam Muhammad Iqbal, is still bleeding and crying for the cherished emancipation from the clutches of despondency.

ALL JAMMU AND KASHMIR MUSLIM CONFERENCE - VOLUNTARY DILIGENCE

The reign of Maharaja Hari Singh can be described as the period of politico-social and socio-economic awakening of the persecuted Muslim majority of the State of Jammu and Kashmir, thereby forming various social and political organisations to safeguard their rights of existence in a peaceful and constitutional manner. The first rung of the ladder towards this step was the formation of a political platform, which emerged in the shape of All Jammu and Kashmir Muslim Conference. Having taken a flying start and arranging a successful inaugural session from 15th to 19th October, 1932, the All Jammu and Kashmir Muslim Conference embarked on a gigantic task of organising the scattered Muslim majority into a cohesive force, uniting them for a common purpose, compromising petty disputes and wooing other minorities into its folds on the basis of equality and fraternity. The movement gained strength and in the light of the recommendations of the [Glancy Commission](#), which was formed to investigate the causes of the unrest in the aftermath of the 13th

July 1931, incident which took its toll of 21 youthful Kashmiris, the Government of Maharaja Hari Singh agreed to give a lenient view to the demands of the Muslims and granted a few rights including the right to franchise, the right to association and the right to freedom of press and speech. The vile and opportunist Kashmiri pandits, under the shrewd patronship of Pandit Jawahar lal Nehru, taking advantage of the leniency of the Maharaja, promptly formed a separate political party " Sunatan Dharam Yuvik Sabha ", followed by the despotic Dogras of Jammu, who formed the " Dogra Sabha ", all at the expense of the Muslims efforts for the freedom of Kashmir. The Muslims as usual, could not unite under a common banner and formed factional associations under the name of " Anjuman Islaah Rasoom " and " Anjuman Itehad ul Muslameen ". Anjuman Islaah Rasoom was patronised by Maulana Muhammad Saeed Masoodi, who undertook to root out the evil trends that had beset the Islamic traditions and effectively counter the menace of Qadianiat, which was trying to spread its fangs into the roots of the Kashmiris, particularly the illiterate Muslim masses. In keeping with the Maharaja's Press Ordinance, some newspapers also obtained publishing rights, prominent amongst them being the daily " Islam ", the daily " Sadaqat ", the daily " Haqqiqat " and the daily " Albarq ".

The fourth decade of the twentieth century, stretching from 1930 to 1940, forms the most volatile period of the Kashmir Freedom Struggle. The burning desire for emancipation in the hearts of the Kashmiris at the cost of their sanguinity and the hope of attaining freedom was kindled in the early years of this decade, which set an example for the coming generations to follow. The movement was the cherished fruit of unflinching faith, unity and unanimity amongst the ranks of the Muslims, notwithstanding the petty disputes which arose out of factional differences between the diverse religious set-up. However, the focal point of their combined struggle was, nevertheless the desire for emancipation from the Dogra despotism and setting up an Islamic welfare state under the banner of All Jammu and Kashmir Muslim Conference, the largest single representative of the Muslim Majority having its roots watered by their sanguinity, in all the spheres of socio-political activities, under the prevailing circumstances. This was the period in the aftermath of the Civil Disobedience Movement in India of 1931, which had shaken the very foundations of the British Dominion and whose echoes resounded across the valley of Jammu and Kashmir. Such was the ferocity of the movement that the people resolved to fight for their constitutional rights, come what may. As a result, All Jammu and Kashmir Muslim Conference came into being as the standard bearer of the two thirds Muslim majority of the State of Jammu and Kashmir. In fact the significance of the Kashmir Freedom Movement and the emergence of All Jammu and Kashmir Muslim Conference as a powerful political forum of the Muslims were the two rungs of the same ladder.

From here started the uphill task of protecting the integrity and identity of the masses for survival in the strife torn Kashmiri society, particularly the Muslim Community which was already showing signs of discord and disunity by the various

religious factions. The Muslim Conference, indeed undertook confrontation on two fronts. On the one hand it had engaged in active politics over the rights of the people against the despotic Dogra Regime. While on the other hand it defended its policies against the factional intrigues of the Azad Muslim Conference of Mir Waiz Maulana Muhammad Yousaf Shah, who was striving for leadership without any solid support from the masses on the behest of some vested interests. To streamline the administrative difficulties and meet the financial needs to support the movement, a Central Baital Maal was established with branches in all villages and towns across the provinces of Jammu and Kashmir, under the Directorship of Bakhshi Ghulam Muhammad. The people made whole hearted donations and soon the treasury was brimming with cash, jewellery and kind, what ever the people could afford for the price of freedom, they had been striving to attain for so long.

SUBSEQUENT ANNUAL SESSIONS

SECOND ANNUAL SESSION - 15 TO 17 DECEMBER, 1933.

It was held under the presidentship of Sheikh Muhammad Abdullah, in Mirpur from 15th to 17th December, 1933. The reception committee was headed by Raja Muhammad Akbar Khan, Raja Sajawal Khan and Maulvi Fazal Deen, the prominent political figures of Mirpur. Maulvi Fazal Deen Advocate acted as his secretary. The delegation went to Mehmunpur, a famous village in Mipur, and held a meeting over there. The meeting was hosted by Raja Sajawal Khan. Delegations from all over the region including Srinagar and its vicinity converged at Mirpur, well ahead of the schedule in anticipation of the enthusiasm generated amongst the public by the Muslim Conference in the wake of its mass contact campaign. The significance aspect of this session was that it was to be graced by Allama Muhammad Iqbal as a special guest. However, he expressed his inability to attend for some personal preoccupation, but through a letter appreciated the efforts of the Muslim Conference for working towards a unified goal. Regretting the apprehension that in the wake of the emerging political factions amongst the Muslims, the diversity of thoughts would create an imbalance and prove a hindrance towards achieving the goal, he remained hopeful that the people of Kashmir would be the ultimate winners and be able to resolve their differences amicably by displaying unanimity amongst their ranks.

Raja Muhammad Akbar Khan in his address of welcome was critical about the issuance of Ordinance 19, L and adoption of Section 108 (A). He expressed deep concern about the anguish and sufferings of the people of Mirpur, who were subjected to unlawful detention and torture, in thousands, in the aftermath of the Movement, resulting in colossal loss to life and property including cattle and domestic animals. He resented the victimization of the Muslim Landlords and depriving them of their holdings for not conniving in false cases. He demanded that to restore peace in the area, all the political detainees be released unconditionally and their financial burden eased by reducing the amount of land revenue to boost

their morale and assist in their rehabilitation. Describing the Glancy Commission Recommendations as a deceitful ploy, he lamented that in spite of various requests and solicitations, certain Mosques were not released into Muslim custody. He also decried the institution of a proposed assembly as a hoax and a debatable proposition. He severely criticized the anti-Muslim policies of the Revenue Adviser Mr. Mehta and demanded that as 90 per cent agricultural holdings belonged to Muslims, the Revenue Adviser should also be a Muslim.

In reply to the address of welcome, Sheikh Muhammad Abdullah in his presidential address fervently appealed to the Muslims to unite for the common cause and explained the detrimental aspects of a divided society to the non-Muslims and other minorities. He demanded freedom of Press, annulment of Section 108 (A), proportional representation of the Muslims in public appointments and government jobs and immediate institution of a Legislative Assembly. He criticized the withdrawal of the Right to Inherit on the basis of religious conversion and the prevailing policies of the Government on Municipal Laws and demanded that the government fulfill its commitments towards the security of peasants and laborers. He extended an invitation to the non-Muslims to cooperate with the Muslim Conference in its struggle for emancipation of the Kashmiri people and expressed his dissatisfaction over the attitude of the Revenue Adviser Mr. D.N.Mehta, through a unanimous no-confidence motion against him.

Consequent to the Second Annual Session of the Muslim Conference in Mirpur, Sheikh Muhammad Abdullah left for Sialkot. Apparently, the political scenario remained calm and peaceful until coincidentally the silence was broken due to the relegation of a Muslim police official ASP Hakeem Habibullah to the rank of Inspector on the suspicion of his so called collaboration with Muslim Conference. The Young Men's Muslim Association took it as an offence and started a civil agitation. At the same time it made a lengthy list of representations to the Government, demanding restoration of the civil rights of the people and institution of a responsible Assembly in the State. Taking cue from the previous year's disturbances at the annual Eid congregation, the government clamped restrictions on the gathering of the public at the Ally Masjid and forbade Mir Waiz Ahmed ullah Hamdani from offering prayers at the mosque. This further infuriated the Young Men's Muslim Association, which considered it an insult and uncalled for interference on the part of the Government in the religious affairs of the Muslims, thereby escalating the agitation throughout Srinagar and its vicinity. The workers of the Muslim Conference also joined hands and as a result faced mass arrests and were subsequently exiled for a period of one year each. In the wake of this agitation section 19-L was enforced in the city of Srinagar and Mir Waiz Ahmed ullah Hamdani was given a stern warning to restrain from instigating the public. The warning had little effect on the public and ultimately Mir Waiz Ahmed ullah Hamdani was also exiled to Lahore, but the agitation, strikes and public unrest continued with greater vigour. As a last resort and a psychological effect, the government decided to act upon the recommendations of the [Franchise Committee Report](#) or the Dallah Committee Report.

In the wake of the extremely explosive situation, President of the All Jammu and Kashmir Muslim Conference, Sheikh Muhammad Abdullah, convened a special meeting of the Central Executive Committee of the party at Sialkot on 10th February, 1934. To avert arrest twenty members of the Central Executive Committee, reached Sialkot from the State under disguise. In the meeting, besides negotiating with the Government on the issue of elections and allied matters, it was decided to disband the Central Executive Committee and appoint Chaudhry Ghulam Abbass Khan as the sole Mediator to pave the way for a civil disobedience movement. Sheikh Muhammad Abdullah was not in favour of such a movement. He failed unconvincingly to win the support of any of the other members of the Central Executive Committee. Therefore, Chaudhry Ghulam Abbass arrived at Srinagar and presented a memorandum to the Prime Minister Col. Calvin, urging him to see reason in the light of the Glancy Commission Recommendations and instituting a responsible Legislative Assembly. However, the government failed to give a convincing reply to the demands, whereby the public became restless and came out on to the streets in the wake of the Civil Disobedience Movement according to the planned programme, which lasted for quite some time. Chaudhry Ghulam Abbass Khan was arrested and lodged in Udampur Prison. Sheikh Muhammad Abdullah remained aloof during this time, but when the government gave a go-ahead for the elections, he jumped back into action, halting the movement abruptly and decided to participate much against the will of Chaudhry Ghulam Abbass Khan, who contended that unless the government accepts all the demands of the Muslim Conference, circumstantial participation in the elections should not be undertaken. But Sheikh Muhammad Abdullah was of the view that if the Muslim Conference did not participate at this juncture, the government would nominate its own candidates to the Muslim seats thereby depriving the Muslims of a fair opportunity to gain their rights and the Muslim Conference to prove its political mettle and anticipate its popularity amongst the masses for the future.

Sheikh Muhammad Abdullah's anticipation stood the test of time. Meanwhile the terms and conditions laid down for the ensuing elections scheduled to be held on 4th Sept. 1934 were strict and hopeless. Mir Waiz Muhammad Yousaf Shah, nominated five candidates on behalf of his party Azad Muslim Conference, creating an extremely volatile situation in and around Srinagar, paving the way for a civil strife. However, any major clash was averted and the Muslim Conference came out victorious on all the five seats defeating the Azad Muslim Conference with a comfortable margin, in all winning sixteen seats out of the twenty-one special seats reserved for the Muslims.

The inaugural session of the resultant State Assembly, constituted in the aftermath of the elections, was held at Sher Garhi, Srinagar on 17th October, 1934. Maharaja Hari Singh chaired the session and Prime Minister Col. Calvin, read out the contents of regulation No.1 of part 1991 of the State Constitution, which was earlier publicized in April, 1934, highlighting the limitations of the newly elected assembly along with the compliments of Maharaja Hari Singh, who for reasons best known to him refrained from addressing the delegates. Anyhow, the session lasted from 17th

October to 2nd November, 1934 and the Muslim Conference actively participated in all the debates and expressed its points of view. The leader of the Muslim Conference Parliamentary Party, Mian Ahmed Yar Khan criticised the State Constitution and severe limitations of the Legislative Powers. He termed these efforts of the government as absurd, derogatory and a cruel joke with the people, who deserved a much better deal on the part of the government. With the exception of Sardar Budh Singh and Jagat Ram, the rest of the non-Muslim Members eulogised Maharaja Hari Singh with flattering speeches and praised his efforts in constituting the Assembly. But in all reality, the credit for constituting the Assembly goes to the insurmountable sacrifices of the people and the unflinching efforts of the Muslim Conference, signifying the first ever constitutional victory for the Kashmiri people for the past so many years.

THIRD ANNUAL SESSION - 11,12,13 NOVEMBER, 1934.

The third annual session of the Muslim Conference, after the inaugural session of the State Assembly, was held at Soopur from 11th to 13 November, 1934, presided over by Mian Ahmed Yar Khan. It was attended by approximately two lac people from all over the State. It culminated on a brisk tone with reiterating the long standing demands of the Muslims for restoration of basic rights. The significant aspect of this session was that it was being held in a remote area of Srinagar, clearly envisaging the growing popularity of the Muslim Conference within a short span of two years. Highlighting the broad spectrum of priorities and intentions of the Muslim Conference, Mian Ahmed Yar Khan in his presidential address emphasised the need for unification of the Muslims of the State of Jammu & Kashmir, protection of their political rights and enhancement of the efforts towards their ethical, educational, social, civic and economical betterment. Various resolutions were passed laying special stress on the right to adult franchise, extension in the limitations of the assembly, implementation of the Glancy Commission Recommendations, establishing of indigenous industries and improving health and educational facilities.

The bane of this era of the Muslim Conference was that its leaders were under detention for the civil disobedience movement along with innumerable workers of the party. Nonetheless, when the elections were held, the party came out victorious with flying colours and bagged 16 out of the 21 seats reserved for the Muslims, whitewashing the Azad Muslim Conference of Mir Waiz Muhammad Yousaf Shah to anonymity. Another bane was that Sheikh Abdullah, on being enticed by the vileness of the Hindu mind, readily fell for the trap of Pandit Prem Nath Bazaz, who very skillfully masterminded the nationalist views of the Indian Congress and convinced Sheikh Abdullah to adopt secular views by propagating Marxist ideas. Pandit Prem Nath Bazaz, according to Mr. Saraf, was an exceptionally gifted Brahmin, who utilized his qualities of head and heart with extreme precision. The Muslims could not apprehend and discern between the vileness of his character and the lip service he rendered for their cause. The result was that they fell apart on

many counts, paving the way for the nationalist policy of the Indian National Congress to make inroads into the ranks of the Muslims of Kashmir in general and Jammu in particular. The political and social ambitions of Sheikh Muhammad Abdullah have always been an open secret. But the fact that he was effectively lured into the folds of the Congress during his extensive tour of the Punjab and other Congress dominated provinces, is proof enough of his gullible nature and propensity towards power mongering in the wake of the false assurances from the extremist nationalist quarters of the Indian National Congress. This amalgam of power politics and toxic affects imbued into the mind of Sheikh Abdullah by his Congressional masters, lasted for a short span, as the subverted leadership of the Muslims including Sheikh Abdullah began to see light in the wake of the Glancy Commission Recommendations and gradually distanced themselves from the nationalist ideas of the Congress. The high profile assertions of Sheikh Abdullah of running the State affairs on Secular, Progressive and Democratic patterns collapsed as sand castles without strong foundations due to lack of Faith in Allah Almighty, diversity of Muslim Ideology and a lust and greed for power. The extent of Hindu extremism began to emerge in the wake of Sheikh Abdullah's dual character, whereby the Congress leadership sternly reprimanded him for making some derogatory remarks on the religious aspect of Hinduism. Sheikh Abdullah stood by his words, that

“Islam is the intrinsic religion like the Shining Sun and other religions are the Stars. ” Taking it as an offence and an insult to Hinduism, the die hard extremists could not gulp the bitter truth and parted ways with National Conference, paving the way for the revival of All Jammu and Kashmir Muslim Conference, which had earlier been transformed into National Conference for fear of the growing popularity of the Muslim Conference amongst the masses.

SHEIKH MOHAMMAD ABDULLAH'S POLITICAL ANALYSIS

Before narrating the account of the fourth annual session of the Muslim Conference, it would be pertinent to analyze the political countenance of Sheikh Mohammad Abdullah with regards to his views about "Nationalism", which unfortunately proved a turning point in jeopardizing and laying bare the intentions of the Congressite Hindus, in the years to come.

To begin with, Sheikh Mohammad Abdullah, appeared on the political horizon of Kashmir in the fall of 1930. At that time, his political ambitions were no secret. His contemporary and old guard, Chaudhry Ghulam Abbas was skeptical about Sheikh Abdullah's belief in secularism or nationalism. However, he cited the reason behind the so called facade of nationalism as a ploy to convince his Congressite masters, to remain in their good books. Otherwise, in his heart of hearts, Sheikh Mohammad Abdullah was never a nationalist. Before him was the unseen promising compulsion of a high governmental office, personal eminence world wide and the false Congressional pretensions of elegance and social get-up for which he was prepared to pay any price whatsoever, even at the expense of the people. In the wake of the Glancy Commission Report, a considerable change of thought emerged amongst the

Muslim leadership including Sheikh Mohammad Abdullah, who thence forth decided to run the affairs of Muslim politics on an extensive, healthy and sectarian free basis. Pandit Prem Nath Bazaaz describing his meeting with Sheikh Mohammad Abdullah, after the declaration of the Glancy Commission Report, goes on to say that just after two months of the publication of this report, Sheikh Mohammad Abdullah met him and apprised him of his decision to run the Kashmir Freedom Movement on non-ethnic, progressive and democratic lines. This alliance with Pandit Prem Nath Bazaaz, did not last long and soon the Congressional leaders lashed out at Sheikh Mohammad Abdullah for harboring sectarian feelings and displaying shallowness of mind and accused him of duality. However, he stuck to his guns and asserted that he was a Muslim first and a Muslim last and would not hesitate to repeat his earlier statement of 24th April, 1940, during a meeting of Eid-e-Milad-un-Nabi, that " Islam is like the Shining Sun and other religions are the stars." The offence taken was that when the Sun rises, the stars fade out, thus relegating the significance of Hinduism to the background. The Hindus could not gulp the bitter truth and parted ways with National Conference on 28th April, 1940, after a meeting of the Working Committee. The logical deduction from this political break-up in the light of the experiences and opinions of Chaudhry Ghulam Abbas and Pandit Prem Nath Bazaaz, could be nothing else but the fact that Sheikh Mohammad Abdullah wanted to run his political campaign under Islamic traditions, in keeping with his strict up-bringing in an Islamic atmosphere, where religious traditions were up-held in high esteem. In the wake of his Islamic grooming, Sheikh Mohammad Abdullah, believed in tolerance and sympathy towards the Hindus, as he was brought up in a Muslim dominant area in Srinagar and strived for a Hindu-Muslim coalition without any hesitation or fear. He was critical of the hypocritic Ruling Hindu elite, who indulged equally in a despotic manner, not with Muslim population only, but poor Hindus were also meted out the same treatment. He thus drew a logical conclusion that the real bane of the whole population was not ethnic or religious as propagated by the ruling clique, but that of a tyrant and the oppressed class. Chaudhry Ghulam Abbas, belonged to Jammu and had a bitter experience of the Hindu domination and the sufferings of the Muslims at the hands of the Hindus. As such he remained ever skeptical about the attitude of the Hindus and shunned the idea of Hindu-Muslim coalition. Sheikh Mohammad Abdullah termed "secularism" as "Islamic tolerance" and asserted, that whenever the public understood the true meaning of secularism, all strives would cease forthwith and peace and tranquility would prevail. Defining the term secularism, he emphasised that true secularism lays in safe-guarding the rights of all majority and minority groups equally, irrespective of religious differences. He felt happy and proud that the majority of the State had never over-ridden the basic rights of the minority in the wake of such sectarian or ethnic strives. It's an irony of fate that whenever the Muslims laid their trust in the non-Muslims, the non-Muslims stabbed them in the back with impunity. Likewise, the non-Muslims never let an opportunity slip out of their hand for sowing discord amongst the rank and file of the Muslims. The end result of this discussion should not be judged singularly by blaming Sheikh Mohammad Abdullah for all the ills, rather it should be taken as a whole, keeping in view the then prevailing circumstances and the deplorable

conditions of the Muslims, as Sheikh Mohammad Abdullah could not be expected to leave his own ailing mother, tending to the ills of some one else and contrary to the plight of Muslims, find solace in the affliction of non-Muslims. Anyhow, Sheikh Mohammad Abdullah had his own logic, feeling proud and remaining strict in compliance.

Nonetheless, Sheikh Mohammad Abdullah's propensity towards nationalism was evident under these circumstances, but his close association with Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru and Pandit Prem Nath Bazaaz strengthened his belief and indulgence in Nationalist ideology. In a letter to Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru, Sheikh Mohammad Abdullah besides extending an invitation to visit the State, expressed his wish to run the political affairs of the State on an Economical and non-sectarian pattern, plugging the wide gulf of differences between the Muslims and the Hindus. Analyzing the political history of the sub-continent during the decade in question, it was a period of turmoil and instability and the politics of the sub-continent were at its lowest ebb. All India Muslim League was facing a split in its ranks and most of the intellectuals were inclined towards the Congress, which was already organised on a strong footing and gaining further ground, due to the political apathy of the Muslim leadership. The Round Table Conference convened in London, had failed to arrive at a decision and the Quaid-e-Azam, in a depressive atmosphere, gave up all hope and settled down in London. Under these circumstances, Sheikh Mohammad Abdullah's political acumen tends to reason with the situation on two counts. First, he was sincerely in favor of Hindu-Muslim unity on account of his belief that in such a situation, the Freedom Movement of Kashmir would gain support. And. Second, he was very much impressed by the relative political situation of India and the personality of Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru and his bright political future, as envisaged by political analysts of the time. According to Sarraf, Nehru had already gained prominence as Gandhi's political prodigy, without a trace of doubt and it was this prominence that was attracting Sheikh Mohammad Abdullah into the folds of Congress. The slogan

" Hindu-Muslim - One Nation " was used as a ploy by the extremist Hindus to woo the Muslims. However, it proved short-lived and stood exposed in the wake of the treatment meted out to the Muslims by the Hindus, in the aftermath of the Elections in Hindu dominated provinces and the unfinished tenure of the Assembly, when the Congress Ministries resigned enmass due to the agitation solicited by the Muslims against the atrocities and suppression of human rights perpetrated by the Hindus. On a fervent appeal by the Quaid-e-Azam, the Muslims observed 15th November, 1939, as

“Deliverance Day ". This had little effect on the subverted minds of some Muslim Congressmen including Sheikh Mohammad Abdullah. This propensity towards the Indian National Congress, did not mean that Congress also shared the views of Sheikh Mohammad Abdullah regarding the status of the Muslims of Kashmir. Had Congress been sincere in its compulsion towards the Freedom Movement of Kashmir, it would undoubtedly have supported the Civil Disobedience Movement against the despotic Hindu ruler. But as the Maharaja was a Hindu, the Congress kept aloof from such a movement, against the interests of the Muslims. This

aloofness proved a turning point and the Muslims distanced themselves from the Congress still further.

FOURTH ANNUAL SESSION - 25, 26, 27 OCTOBER, 1935

The significant aspect of the fourth annual session was the release of Chaudhry Ghulam Abbas from detention and holding of the session under his presidentship, amidst the growing differences in the ranks of the Muslim leadership on certain policy matters regarding elections of the Assembly. Nevertheless, it was held with great enthusiasm and patriotic fervor, creating a sense of fear amongst the ruling elite for the resurgence of the glorious past of the Muslims. Prior to Sheikh Abdullah's nationalist policies, there was no concept of nationalism amongst the Kashmiris, both Muslims and Hindus. As a first step towards creating a goodwill amongst the two estranged communities, in the entire history of the State of Jammu and Kashmir, the Hindus participated with equal fervor and largely contributed towards its success, thus sounding an alarm in the higher quarters of the State to mend their ways.

In his presidential address, Chaudhry Ghulam Abbas emphatically stressed upon the audience, the need for creating Unity and Discipline amongst their ranks. Elaborating, he said that peace and tranquility in the State could only be maintained, if the rulers set aside any premonitions and follow the democratic norms of sharing the power with the subjects. Besides improving the distressed and indigent conditions of the masses by introducing Administrative Reforms and harmonising the budgetary allocations of the State, he went on to stress for better facilities for the agricultural class in the light of the recommendations of the [Glancy Commission Report](#).

Speaking about the unemployment amongst the Kashmiri people he suggested that the mineral resources should be explored and the services of the laborers and the unemployed should be utilized for mining these resources and reducing the rate of unemployment amongst the people, thus contributing towards the welfare of the people besides enhancing the revenues of the State. He implied the significance for the improvement of the State's Industrial, Trade and Commerce Sectors and demanded that the impediments in the fields of education, government jobs, religious freedom and other social aspects concerning the State's subjects in general and the Muslims in particular, should be removed and the injustice meted out to the Muslims be appropriately redeemed. In a fervent appeal to the non-Muslim minorities, he emphasized his assurance for the betterment of the lot on the basis of the Islamic principles of equality, fraternity and above all religious freedom, wherein lay the foundations of a glorious past.

Inviting their attention towards the significance of liberation, he counted his expectations upon their belief, wisdom and boldness to bear in mind that their salvation lay in their struggle for a united emancipation from the clutches of despondency.

The Quaid-e-Azam may have visited Kashmir as a youthful tourist in his early life without having any political bearings, but his two known visits during the turbulent

years from 1931 to 1947, were essentially of a political nature in the wake of the partition plan in the subcontinent. His first visit in 1936, in the aftermath of the announcement of the Constitutional elections, according to the British Parliament Act of 1935, was apparently to attend the proceedings of two litigation cases in the J & K High Court, but effectually, was to organize the political setup of the All India Muslim League in Kashmir and establishment of the Central Parliamentary Board and announcement of its Members.

The additional significant aspect that surfaced during this visit was the direct dialogue between the Quaid-e-Azam and the representatives of the Kashmiri Muslims, who apprised him about their plight. He advised them to strengthen their Faith in Allah Almighty, follow the teachings of the Holy Quran, the sayings and Sunnah of the Holy Prophet of Islam (P.B.U.H) and organize unity and discipline amongst their ranks as their salvation lay in their adherence to these cardinal aspects and ethical values of Islam.

REORGANIZATION OF MUSLIM CONFERENCE AND HINDU-MUSLIM UNITY

In the aftermath of the 4th Annual Session of the Muslim Conference, began the gigantic task of reorganizing the Muslim Conference. On the one hand, Chaudhry Ghulam Abbas, in his capacity as President, faced the up-hill task of uniting the scattered Muslim population on a sound footing, under the banner of Muslim Conference. While on the other hand he had to under take confidence building amongst the non-Muslim population and bring them into the folds of Muslim Conference. In his presidential address at the 4th Annual Session, he had expressed his hopes of uniting the Muslims and the Hindus on a common platform, in the following words:-

"Setting aside the eventualities of the past, I fervently appeal to my non-Muslim countrymen, to extend their cooperation, with the assurances that the Muslim nationhood, does not want to suppress the rights of any other minority. The Muslims only desire harmony and welfare with justice for all and request for a collective effort towards the struggle for the liberation of the country. I place high hopes and expectations on the leaders of the non-Muslims in the wake of the grave national problem to consider my appeal with courage and sincere determination, with the belief that their salvation lies herein."

Consequently, he undertook an intensive tour of Jammu and Kashmir and spanned the three hundred miles hilly route from Jammu to Srinagar, in about a month's time, addressing about one lac Muslims at twenty mammoth rallies on the way. Meanwhile, efforts for Hindu-Muslim unity also continued as is evident from the fact that many hindu leaders had attended the 4th Annual Session, voluntarily, after the bitter realisation that the despotic government was hoodwinking the people on the false assurances of a democratic set-up. The pretensions of the government had been laid bare during the previous Assembly session, when the official members suppressed the voice of the public with hollow and unsubstantial slogans, paving the

way for a Hindu member Sardar Budh Singh, to present his resignation and terming the Assembly as a group of " Turncoats ". The members of the Muslim Conference agreed to his opinion and resigned enmass on 27th November, 1936, with the assertion that the current State Assembly was a useless infrastructure, without a clear public mandate, imposing the will of the despotic ruler on the people.

During the year 1936, no annual session of the Muslim Conference could be convened. However, its significance aspect lies in the fact that Quaid-e-Azam visited Kashmir as a tourist, in connection with the pleadings of a case " Mehr Ali vs Hanifa Begum " in the Srinagar High Court. He was ably assisted by Mirza Mohammad Afzal Baig as a junior advocate. He won the case convincingly and donated the Fee towards the welfare fund of the Islamia High School, Srinagar. Another significant aspect was that the first ever meeting between the Quaid-e-Azam and Chaudhry Ghulam Abbas materialised during this visit. On 3rd June, 1936, during a congregation of Eid-e-Milad-un-Nabi, at Srinagar's "Pathar Masjid", the Muslim Conference invited the Quaid-e-Azam on behalf of the Kashmiri Muslims. Eulogizing the struggle of the Quaid-e-Azam for the cause of the Muslims of the sub-continent, Chaudhry Ghulam Abbas paid rich tributes to him and cited his services and sacrifices as a beacon of light for the struggle of the Kashmiri Muslims. He was highly appreciative of the Quaid's exceptional qualities of character, sobriety, love for Islam, the desire for emancipation and his belief in Hindu-Muslim unity.

In his reply to the presidential address, the Quaid stressed the need for a Hindu-Muslim unity, for which he had labored day in and day out. But being unaware of the problems of the State, he was unable to give any specific opinion. However, he added that he would like to advise the leadership of the majority to respect the rights of the minorities with equanimity, and make them realize that they would receive justice and equality without prejudice, as that being their moral obligation towards the minorities.

GOPALASWAMY AIYNGAR AS PRIME MINISTER

After the dissolution of the Srinagar Assembly in November, 1936, in the wake of the combined movement by the Muslim, Hindu and Sikh youths to foster a Hindu-Muslim unity on 8th May, 1936 and subsequent establishment of Kashmir Students Union in July, 1936, Prime Minister Col. Calvin was removed from office and Gopaldaswamy Aiyngar, a die-hard Congressite pandit was installed as the new Prime Minister in early 1937. The moment he stepped into office, he let loose a reign of terror, by violating the human rights of the Muslims and introducing atrocious reforms against all ethical and moral norms, which were highly derogatory and discriminatory to the Muslims interest. Hindi language was made compulsory and imposed upon the Muslims forcibly. Discriminatory Arms Act was passed, whereby the Muslims were un-armed and the Hindus were provided with arms and ammunition. According to the Glancy Commission Recommendations, the Muslims were granted some basic rights and concessions in jobs and other governmental affairs. Mr. Aiyngar tended to do away with these rights and concessions by having

the published copies of the Glancy Commission Report destroyed on the pretext that these were no longer required, highlighting the apathy of the ruling class towards the public in general and the Muslim majority in particular.

BYE - ELECTIONS

Not being content with the break-up of the Assembly, in the wake of mass resignations by the Members of Muslim Conference and some Hindu members, the government opted for bye-elections to the Assembly in February, 1937. The result was no different than that of the previous Assembly, as the same Members of the Muslim Conference once again emerged victorious, with a thumping majority, asserting the popularity of the Muslim Conference amongst the public in general and the Muslims in particular.

FIFTH ANNUAL SESSION - 14, 15, 16 MAY, 1937

The fifth annual session of Muslim Conference was convened at Poonch on the demand of the political leaders of Poonch, which was chaired by Sheikh Mohammad Abdullah. The proceedings of the session lasted for three days. In his presidential address Sheikh Mohammad Abdullah highlighted almost every political and social problem being faced by the Muslims. He particularly stressed upon the Muslims to excel in the field of education. Other speakers highlighted the backwardness of Poonch and demanded establishing of an Intermediate College in District Poonch and a hospital in Srinagar to cater to the educational and health needs of the people. Besides patronizing Trade and Industry, a department for Mineral development may also be established, in order to create jobs for laborers and improve their lot. Through another resolution, a demand of establishing a University in the State was also stressed. The demand for establishing a responsible system of government was also repeated, interpreting it with a democratic government. Sheikh Mohammad Abdullah, reiterated in his presidential address that the demand for a democratic government was not new. In fact, the establishment of a responsible Assembly and an autonomous form of Government have been the ideals of the the Muslim Conference, ever since its inception, all through the struggle for freedom. About the rights of the minorities in the State, he said that the Resolution of the Muslim Conference, was more lively than the one which the Indian National Congress has passed for the minorities in British India, much to the dismay of the Muslim population. Assuring the non-Muslims of equal rights, he stressed that the International principle of equanimity, prevailing in different countries, could also be interpreted in Jammu and Kashmir. He applauded the efforts of the non-Muslim minorities, who were working towards a sectarian free society for the benefit of the general public and struggling for emancipation from the clutches of despondency. He was critical of the Government of India Act, 1935 and expressed his annoyance on the clause whereby Public Representation was flouted by the Ruling Class, who held the right to nominate the representatives against the wishes of the general public, who already lamented or bemoaned their despicable role. He regretted this negligence on the part of the rulers and interpreted it as suppression

of human rights. He termed the current constitution as a joke and a dark horse in the history of the State, where the people were no more than cattle herd or so many logs of wood. Under these circumstances, a resolution was adopted demanding of the Maharaja to make the right to franchise for the public representation as an imperative towards joining the Indian Federation. Besides, the status of the State Assembly should mostly be an elected one and the Cabinet to be held answerable to the Assembly.

The vileness of the Hindu mind can be gauged from the fact that in the aftermath of the 5th Annual Session of the Muslim Conference, which had ended on a positive note and a step closer to the Hindu-Muslim unity, the militant die hard Hindu pandits of the " Yovik Sabha ", under the Presidentship of Pandit Shivnarain Fotedar, on 7th June, 1937, delivered a highly provocative and blasphemous statement, hurting the feelings and sentiments of the Muslims by saying that " Hindus respect and revere the Cow in the same way the Muslims respect and revere Hazrat Mohammad, the last Apostle of God, (Peace be upon him)." This sparked a furious agitation in the minds of the Muslims, who came out in the streets and demanded strict punishment for the blasphemy under the leadership of Mir Waiz Maulana Mohammad Yousaf Shah. The demonstrators were fired upon by the Dogra Police of Srinagar, resulting in the martyrdom of one youth and injuries to scores of other people. Mir Waiz Mohammad Yousaf Shah was taken into custody and released after 15 days, after the situation was made to simmer down. Another incident occurred in the Poonch District Jail , where the Superintendent of the Jail, who was a Kashmiri Pandit and the Doctor of the Jail as well, desecrated the Holy Quran. The news spread like wild fire and thousands of Muslims armed with hatchets and spears, emerged onto the scene. The Government could only control the situation after rendering an unconditional apology and suspending the Superintendent from service and ordering an inquiry against him. Sheikh Mohammad Abdullah along with Sardar Budh Singh and Pandit Prem Nath Bazaaz, arrived at the scene and controlled the situation from aggravating any further, but the ethnic spark had been kindled by the vileness of the Hindu mind, which took its toll after a few months by setting fire to a Hindu Temple and the blame was put on a few Muslims of the area, absolving the militant " Yovik Sabha " of any charges.

To counter the activities of the " Yovik Sabha ", the Muslims under the leadership of Khawaja Mohiuddin Kirah, established the " Kashmir Mazdoor Sabha " and observed " Labourers Day " on 14th November, 1937. The congregation was so well organized, that the Government became apprehensive of its success and could well read the writing on the wall. To diminish the effects of the successful launching of the " Kashmir Mazdoor Sabha ", the government could but only exile one of the prominent worker Faiz Ahmed Paracha and clamp restrictions on the weekly " Hamdard " edited by Pandit Prem Nath Bazaaz, for unsolicited favor of the " Kashmir Mazdoor Sabha ", for six months.