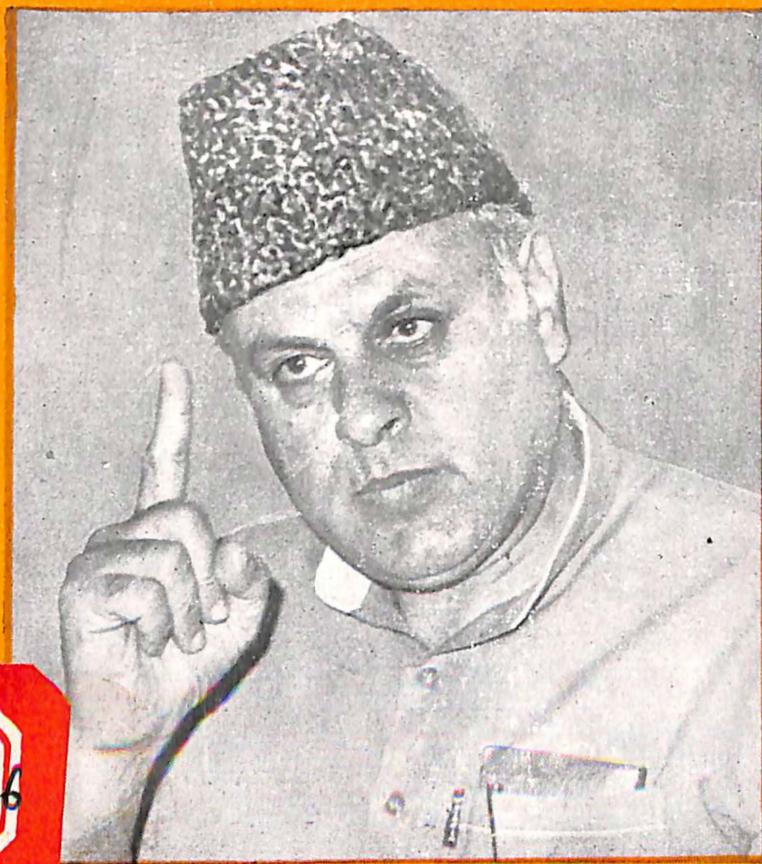


MY DISMISSAL



Farooq Abdullah
as told to Sati Sahni

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FAROOQ ABDULLAH
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Preface

Right from 2 July 1984—the day I was unconstitutionally removed from office as Chief Minister, I have been asked countless times how and why I was dismissed.

I had no desire of putting on paper the unsavoury details of a bitter chapter in the history of Jammu & Kashmir. I had thought that with the passage of time, the allegations and false charges which were advanced at the time of my dismissal, would not be repeated; but the political elements opposed to both me and the National Conference, have continued to trumpet them within Jammu & Kashmir and in rest of the country.

The recent happenings in Andhra Pradesh have many parallels with my dismissal. Both exhibit a diabolical plan to inject base values in the body politic of India, with only one aim—how to get into power and stay there disregarding all norms of democratic polity based on federalism. Did our elders struggle long years to achieve freedom and Independence and did the founding fathers of our Republic, lay down foundations for this?

I have now been persuaded to disclose the details to put the record straight. This will also let my countrymen know what Farooq Abdullah really stands for.

FAROOQ ABDULLAH

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Operation “New Star”

The Governor of Jammu & Kashmir, Shri Jagmohan dismissed me from Chief Ministership on July 2, 1984 at about 5.30 p.m. The drama, however, had started much earlier.

Early that morning a little before 7 o'clock, I received a telephone call from Shri Abdul Ghani Lone, Chairman of Peoples Conference, that a number of National Conference MLAs had defected and at that time were at the Raj Bhavan. This did not surprise me but I told him that in the recent past I had heard many such stories and would not know if it was a fact or not. I had just put down the receiver when the Governor called me from the Raj Bhavan and asked me if I could see him immediately because it was urgent. I told him that I would reach Raj Bhavan after getting ready. Luckily I had arranged to visit some areas outside Srinagar, so my personal staff was already on duty. I drove to the Raj Bhavan and got there by 7.30 a.m. There I was informed by Mr. Jagmohan that twelve members of my party had defected and that I had lost the majority in the Legislative Assembly. I asked him to tell me who these members were. He showed me a photostat copy of their letter dated 28 June, 1984. Some of the names I could not even read. He told me that they were all there in the other room. I refused to see them. I did not want to see the faces of all those who had deceived me, and betrayed the trust my people and I had put in them. While discussing the next move, Mr. Jagmohan told me that he would not like to hand over the Government to Mr. G.M. Shah, because he (the Governor) had reports about activities of Mr. Shah and also about his ruthlessness and everything else. I told the Governor that I was still the Chief Minister and he had to go by my advice. At this stage, he said that he felt that Governor's rule would be the most appropriate thing for the State, and the Legislative Assembly should be put in suspended

animation. He felt that this would be the right course. I asked whether I could discuss this with my cabinet colleagues. I said this because it would not have been right and proper for me to give the Governor my opinion without consulting my colleagues. At that time the Governor told me that General Chibber (of Northern Command) was also in Raj Bhavan I was surprised to learn that the General had come to visit the Governor so early, and I asked whether I could meet him. Mr. Jagmohan took me to his office where General Chibber was sitting. I think they had already planned the deployment of army units to overawe me and my supporters. Mr. Jagmohan told the General what we had discussed and also told him about my reaction to Governor's rule. I told both of them that as Chief Minister whatever advice I gave would be binding on the Governor according to the State Constitution. Before I left the Raj Bhavan, the Governor said that a letter would follow soon. This letter of his reached my residence at 9 a.m. There was a postscript to this letter. It was obvious that it had been written before I had even reached the Raj Bhavan, and the postscript was added after I had returned home at about 8.30 a.m. I called my Cabinet colleagues to my residence for an urgent meeting. While we were in the meeting, the Governor's letter arrived¹, and was immediately discussed. The reply was drafted and sent at about 10.30 a.m. to the Raj Bhavan through the Chief Secretary. All the members of my Cabinet, were unanimous about the reply sent to the Governor.² We then waited for the reply from the Governor. It did not come till that evening. At about 2 p.m. we learnt that arrangements were being made to impose Governor's Rule, and that the Assembly would be dissolved. Later, at 5.30 p.m. on so, I received a letter from the Governor dismissing my Government.³ Sometime later, the ministry headed by Mr. G.M. Shah was sworn in. The whole manoeuvre here was by Delhi's order and approval. The Governor was being constantly advised and directed from Delhi. I am sorry they had to resort to such undemocratic steps.

Mr. Jagmohan in an interview to *Srinagar Times* on 25 Sep.

¹See Annexure A

²See Annexure B.

³See Annexure C.

1984, claimed that he had warned me about impending defections many days in advance. This is not true. The first time that he spoke to me about the suspected defections, was on the day previous to my dismissal. We were together for over an hour. We talked about a number of things and he told me about the efforts he had made to effect a reconciliation between me and the Centre. While we were talking he said, "What do you think of defections?" I said, "Sir, they have tried a number of times and they may continue to try. If there are interested persons in the Centre who want to feed them, then I can't do very much. But if they don't get the support from the Centre, they will not be able to do anything." That was about the only time that the Governor referred to defections. I feel sorry for him, because he is trying to get out of a difficult situation. He told another journalist that he gave me an entire day before dismissing me. This too is totally incorrect. His letter dated 2 July reached me at my residence at 9. a.m. that morning. My reply to him was sent at 10.30 a.m. This conveyed to him the decision my Government had taken on his first letter. We had expected that he would accept the advise of his Council of Ministers, but he decided not to, which resulted in chaos that followed the installation of the Shah Government.

It has been revealed now that the defectors had telephoned the Governor at 11.30 a.m. on 1 July and wanted to see him. The Governor asked them to meet him the next morning. That whole night, it is clear, was spent by him in making arrangements for next day. He obviously got in touch with Delhi, with the Army Commander, General Chibber, BSF and CRP. He must have also asked for two battalions of Madhya Pradesh Special Armed Force (trained for anti-dacoity operations) to be flown from Bhopal, before daybreak. If the Governor did not have the entire plan of action before him, he could not have anticipated how things would develop, when the defectors met him next morning. One is tempted to ask the question, why did he have to make all the special arrangements for meeting law and order situation which he envisaged would develop if I was not to be illegally dismissed. He knew the entire plan because he was privy to the cloak and dagger ouster that had been decided.

I have been asked by many people, why did I concede that I had lost the majority. Let it be made clear that I never conced-

ed this at any stage in my meeting with the Governor, for I had wanted the Assembly to be convened forthwith where I could and would demonstrate and prove that I still enjoyed the majority support of its members.

The sordid drama of the midnight coup has raised many constitutional and political issues vital for the future of Democracy. The most vital issue is: "Has the Raj Bhavan taken over the functions of Legislative Assembly?" For any Government to stand or fall, the question of its enjoying the majority has to be established on the floor of the Legislative Assembly not in the drawing room of the Raj Bhavan. The other important issue that has been thrown up by this dismissal is: "Do elections have any meaning and are they of any consequence?" Do they serve any purpose if the Governor has to exercise his discretion to appoint a Chief Minister and then give him ample time "to buy" a majority? If Delhi can have its way in such matters, then elections of the Legislators in the States, will cease to have any meaning; people's will and votes become unimportant, even dispensable. Here was my Government, elected and voted to power, by the people. We were given the mandate to stay in Government for the next six years. Delhi was able to upset the applecart in about a year's time. One thing should be remembered that if it can happen here it can happen anywhere else. It has already happened in Sikkim and Andhra Pradesh. In Sikkim even a Congress Chief Minister, who fell out with Mrs. Gandhi, was thrown out. The ousted Chief Minister, Mr. Bhandari with his supporters went all the way to Delhi, showed his majority to the press and people and claimed to be reinstalled on that basis. Instead of that the Government of India immediately dismissed the other Chief Minister and imposed President's Rule. This shows the high-handedness of Delhi and brings out clearly, how Delhi is systematically destroying the federal character of the India Constitution.

I had to be removed as Chief Minister before the general elections as Mrs. Gandhi feared that I had the potential to cause a lot of damage to the Congress vote bank. Although in Jammu and Kashmir there are only six seats but to her every single seat was important because she wanted to have a two-thirds majority in the Lok Sabha. She was afraid that as Chief Minister, Farooq Abdullah going around various states and

speaking against the Congress would affect the fortunes of the Congress candidates. She miscalculated because the way I was dismissed and as a victim of Central action which was patently unconstitutional, my electioneering for opposition candidates, would be more effective and damaging. They never thought that my dismissal would result in arms upheaval in public for many months. Nor did they bargain for the amount of support I would receive both outside as also in Kashmir. They never could think that the entire national opposition would get together on one platform to condemn this dismissal as unconstitutional. They further thought that by painting me as anti-national and pro-Pakistani, there would be a demand all over the country, for my head. In this also they failed miserably; Indian people saw through this crude game. Even her own Home Minister had to say that Farooq Abdullah is not anti-national, but was soft towards anti-national elements. I refute this charge that my regime was soft towards such elements as also the Sikh extremists. The Union Home Minister at one time alleged that my dismissal was in national interest but a few days later in reply to a debate in the Lok Sabha, said, "Farooq Abdullah is not anti-national". It is obvious that all the propaganda before my dismissal was to prepare the ground for "operation topple" which they staged. The new Home Minister, Shri Narsimha Rao must have realised that he could not "sell a lie". It is not possible for them to prove their wild and baseless allegations which are simple fiction. Since I had already been dismissed they felt it would not matter if they admitted the truth once in a while.

If I was dismissed because allegedly I had lost majority support in the Legislative Assembly then it was all the more necessary that Governor should have summoned the Assembly without any delay and I could have been voted out, constitutionally. The fact that this procedure was not followed was because the Governor realized that I had the support of the majority. I had told the Governor that morning that if I am voted out on the floor of the House, I will go honourably and without any fuss.

The Governor in his report to the President is reported to have alleged that my Government dealt with the law and order situation preceding my dismissal, in a half-hearted manner. This is indeed strange as he himself had praised my prompt and

strong action in dealing with the situation that arose in parts of Srinagar on 7 June following the radio announcement of the death of Jarnail Singh Bhindranwale. The Governor said he was thrilled to see how promptly I had acted. My Government took the necessary action whenever required. We hesitated to take repressive measures to crush people; India is a democratic country. We tried to maintain democratic traditions and did not put unnecessary curbs on the liberties of the people. I never used police or paramilitary forces as the Shah Government is doing presently. I never disallowed legitimate political activity. I could have locked up everyone inconvenient but did I use such means to deal with my opponents? Were my methods objectionable?

The Governor in his Report to the President, according to press reports, has said that "since there was ample evidence available in the past events that Mr. Farooq Abdullah and his followers would resort to coercive manipulations to scuttle any change of Government in a democratic way, I did not consider it appropriate to let the situation drift". The Governor is clearly misrepresenting facts to justify his illegal actions. Was the change brought about in the Government, by him, in any way, "democratic"? What evidence does he have to prove his charge? Was it not a subjective decision made by him, on behest of Delhi, to somehow remove me from the office? Let me share with you what Mr. Jagmohan told me at the morning at the Raj Bhavan meeting with him on 2 July. He said that at no cost was he prepared to hand over the administration to them. My record is there, I have never used coercive methods during my Government, the way Shah Sahib has done when the Governor gave him one month to demonstrate his majority in the Legislative Assembly. And in this one month he desperately tried to force my MLAs to side with him, arrested some and tempted them with juicy offers. All except three refused to succumb.

Conspiracy to Dismiss

The Congress (I) and Mrs Gandhi were unwilling to live with rival centres of power in the States. This becomes evident from their manipulations in Jammu and Kashmir and Andhra Pradesh. From the time I formed my Government after the general elections in June, 1983, I lived from minute to minute for I knew that Delhi would topple me sooner or later: they were intent upon it.

All along Mrs. Gandhi and the Home Minister said that there was no move to topple Farooq Abdu'lah; meanwhile some Congress MPs and "Chotta" Ministers presented memoranda and issued well-orchestrated statements from time to time demanding my dismissal and Punjab-like operation to be mounted. There was evidently a plan of sustained pressure, an aggressive propaganda campaign and engineered defections. Let us look at the catalogue of perfidy.

The demand for my dismissal was made at the Congress Working Committee on 20 June 1984 AICC meetings at Calcutta, Bombay and Kurukshestra and repeated by the same set of MPs over the months. The Congress delegation, including two Union Ministers, submitted a memorandum to President. And the J & K Pradesh Congress Committee, also, submitted a memorandum to the Governor, Mr. B.K. Nehru.

The principal actors in this show, were Arun Nehru, Makhanlal Fotedar, Ghulam Nabi Azad, Arif Mohammed Khan, Mufti Mohammed Syed (PCC President), Moulvi Iftikhar Hussain Ansari (Leader of Congress Legislature Party), Pt. Mangat Ram Sharma (PCC General Secretary), Mr. D.D. Thakur and, of course, Mr. Ghulam Mohammed Shah. The cast which performed as directed, was presided over by Mrs. Gandhi who was the Director and Producer. She was the one who appointed Mr. Jagmohan as Governor, with the sole intention

of having a convenient and a pliable being, who was to carry out orders from Delhi, faithfully. The Indian Constitution neither has any provision, nor does it envisage, transfer of a Governor from one State to another, yet Mr. Jagmohan was sent to replace Mr. B.K. Nehru, who had declined to carry out unconstitutional orders. This transfer was a warning signal for me, that the days of my Government were numbered.

Since direct and open dismissal of my Government, may result in a strong backlash of people's resentment, the Congress High Command decided to work for my downfall through disgruntled elements in my party, who were already in league with Messrs. G.M. Shah and D.D. Thakur. The plan to overthrow my Government, was given final shape on 23 June in Delhi when Mufti Syed was summoned there. Soon Mr. Jagmohan also was in the Capital, for consultations. The conspiracy had been hatched and the blueprint drawn up in 1, Safdarjang Road, New Delhi. Mufti Mohammed Syed spilled the beans in Jammu on 26 June when he predicted change in the Government in a few days. The operation was given the code name "Operation New Star", I was told. Their plan was to make it appear as if the Governor was not an active party in the conspiracy.

The defecting MLAs were lodged in a convenient but "safe" bungalow from where they could not escape. It was also arranged that they were transported before dawn to the Raj Bhavan. The defectors, before they came to the Governor, had already "elected" Mr. Shah as "leader," and the Congress (I) Legislature party had "met" and pledged support to Mr. Shah. This surely is no democratic way for legislators to switch political allegiance, surreptitiously and without even taking their constituents into confidence. If it was a natural and normal process of loss of faith in my leadership it need not have happened in the darkness of night. But as the *Guardian* of London described it, the deed "had to be done at dead of night for fear it would come unstuck". Even the AIR was used to help the conspirators by announcing it in its national news bulletin at 8 a.m., while I was still in the Raj Bhavan talking to the Governor. Was this not a full-fledged conspiracy? And yet the Union Home Minister informed the Lok Sabha on 8 July that Farooq Abdullah's removal was not pre-planned. He also denied that

any instructions or directions in this regard had been given to the Governor.

I first got an inkling of Delhi's conspiracy to dismiss me, when I was called to Delhi on 24 January 1984. At that time Mr. B.K. Nehru was the Governor and he had refused to take any unconstitutional step and also prevented all those actions that Delhi proposed to take. This bought me precious time. The second indication was the appointment of Mr. Jagmohan as Governor in place of Mr Nehru. I then knew that things would move fast and changes would come soon. The whole nation and the national press sounded a warning by saying that a "stormtrooper" had been sent to Kashmir to "throw out Farooq Abdullah". I still could not believe that Delhi could stoop so low and take undemocratic steps. Here, I did not want to purchase anyone's loyalty or to placate the forces inimical to me. I also did not want to take any measures to curb the liberties of the people. I could have locked these people up or used repressive measures on them and their families but that is not my character. I felt that a democratically elected Government should be truly democratic, not only in name but also in deeds. I therefore did not make any moves to counter theirs, by buying them or luring them with ministerships. This is against my nature and not my way of playing politics. This incidentally, was the fourth attempt at engineering defections, the earlier three having failed. This time bids were raised and offers made more tempting, difficult to resist for men and women of that kind.

Mr. Jagmohan came to Jammu and Kashmir, having already earned the sobriquet of a "political fixer for the Congress". Here, he became the principal instrument in getting rid of my duly elected Government which enjoyed the massive support of the people of Jammu and Kashmir. He was a direct party to the conspiracy but various trappings were given a dramatic touch to make it appear a natural political event. It was unfortunate but true that Mr. Jagmohan agreed to act as an ordinary volunteer of the Congress Party rather than Head of State weighed down with the constitutional responsibility, of upholding the Constitution, which oath he had taken when he was sworn in as Governor. He flouted the Constitution and behaved as an officer of the Central Government. When he took office in April last I had thought that here was an energetic young man who would

be an asset to Kashmir but soon he proved himself unworthy of the high office he was holding. He was out to please powers that be, even if it meant the destruction and desecration of the Constitution. By his actions he negated the will of the people and treated them with contempt. His actions were unwarranted and authoritarian. People had given us the mandate in a bitterly fought election in which the entire Congress brigade headed by Mrs. Gandhi herself, participated; large amounts of money were disbursed by them. She used all her might and devious methods to defeat us. So much so that Army units were deployed in certain border areas of Jammu which would influence the voters. She also made use of the Intelligence Bureau personnel to threaten voters with dire consequences if they did not vote for the Congress candidates. Such was the election, we won and this Mr. Jagmohan undid. Delhi seems to be treating Kashmir as a colony even when we are a full-fledged State of the Union of India.

While I was still the Chief Minister holding the Home portfolio, the Governor without consulting me or informing the Director-General of Police, had requisitioned two battalions of Special Armed Force (SFA) from Madhya Pradesh, which were airlifted to Srinagar. The first plane, I am told had landed in Srinagar before even the defectors had reached the Raj Bhavan. These forces were deployed all over Srinagar on 2 July, when I was removed from power. This was absolutely irregular and unconstitutional. Normally by Director-General of Police should have told me of his requirement and as Home Minister of the State I would have requested the Union Home Ministry for additional force. We were completely ignored and the centre, like overlords, carried out the entire process over our heads through the Raj Bhavan. This makes it further obvious that this Operation Topple, was preplanned to the last detail. Imagine the amount of expenditure in airlifting two battalions from Bhopal to Srinagar, and this poor country had to pay for it. If as the Governor claims, I had lost the majority support in the Legislative Assembly, then there was no need to fly them and post them all over Srinagar. The Governor also had requested the Army for additional force to standby. He certainly transgressed his powers as the Governor. Why was I not informed of this move when I was still the Chief Minister? This surely makes it

suspect and part of the conspiracy I am sure one day they will pay for it.

The Governor's action in dismissing my Government, was invalid in law. The Raj Bhavan was not the place to test my majority that day, it should have been tested on the floor of the House, at the earliest. The time of one month given to Mr. Shah, was to engineer disloyalities, desertions and defections. This hamhanded action of the Governor cannot be justified under any law. Toppling an elected Government in a State, and then deploying massive forces to shore up the "sponsored one" is the surest road to ultimate dismemberment of Indian polity.

The complicity of Congress (I) in my dismissal is patent and evident. Since the formation of my Government in June 1983, repeated denouncements of my Government were made by Congressmen and their mouthpieces. And some of them were major functionaries of this party. After an important meeting of the PCC Presidents, the plan to topple my Government was hatched up. Mr Devi Das Thakur, was the principal contact between Mr. G.M. Shah, and the Congress High Command. Continuous demand made by various Congressmen and their organisational set-ups, demanding my dismissal and culminating in the address to party workers in Jammu by the PCC President Mufti Mohammed Syed, five days before the event, were important pointers. Then on the fateful night of 1-2 July, the Congress Legislature Party decided to support the defectors. Mark the word "simultaneously" in the Raj Bhavan Press Release⁴ dated 2 July 1984, used to describe the timing of the handing over of the letter extending support to Mr. Shah of the Congress Legislature Party. If they were not a party to this Conspiracy, how did all this come about. This must have been decided earlier in Delhi by the Congress High Command in consultation with Mr. D.D. Thakur and Mr. G.M. Shah. Another point to be noted is that on 2 July, Delhi turned down the Governor's recommendation to impose Governor's rule. Mr. Jagmohan was directed by Delhi to instal Mr. G.M. Shah, as Chief Minister, at any cost, employing any means. This proves their total and direct involvement in getting rid of my Government. Also in support of this is the fact that Congress has extended unconditional and

⁴See Annexure D.

total support to the Shah Government. All his actions, good or bad, are being supported without question. Today with all the problems in the State, Delhi is smug and nothing is mentioned while during my tenure even a fight between two cows on a street was taken note of. On the economic front Mrs. Gandhi used to say that J&K was twentieth on the list, now when it has slipped to the very bottom, no mention is made of its economic position anywhere. When during my period, curfew had to be imposed even for a day I was severely criticised for my failure to establish law and order under Mr. Shah's benign rule Srinagar had to live under curfew for days an end but no one in Delhi talks about it or the misery people in Kashmir are facing due to the high handedness of the administration. The Congress (I) is directly involved in all these manoeuvres. Twisted reasoning has been advanced by AICC in its statement of 6 July, justifying the support. I said "Extending support to a minority government is nothing new in Indian politics." Would anyone believe that without Congress support and agreement, defections would have been possible or that Ghulam Mohammed Shah would have been able to form the Government and lasted more than a day. It is obvious that Congress contrived, planned and executed the Conspiracy and Mr. G.M. Shah ambitious that he is, became a willing tool in their hands.

Against this backdrop just see the role played by the National Opposition parties. Two days after my dismissal, on 4 July, Mr. R.K. Hegde, Karnataka Chief Minister, organised a meeting of all important opposition leaders, in New Delhi, to discuss my dismissal and the resultant situation. There I met all the leaders and Chief Ministers of non-Congress ruled States of Karnataka, Andhra Pradesh and Tripura, Mr. Charan Singh, Mr. A. B. Vajpayee, Mr. Chander Shekhar and others. I put across to them the entire picture of the happenings from the day I was elected in June 1983 to the day of my dismissal, so that they got the full perspective. They decided to send a delegation to Srinagar, the next day, to see things for themselves and to meet people. They came and tasted life under the Shah Government. The saw life under curfew and the large deployment of paramilitary forces all over Srinagar. With great difficulty I was able to take them to Mujahid Manzil, headquarters of my National Conference party, in the heart

of the city. Even with curfew clamped down, large crowds managed to come and gather there to hear them speak. They shouted slogans like "Hindustan Zindabad" and hailed the Opposition leaders and their parties. This visit was a great boost to the morals of the people here who believe in democracy and the institutions that must remain in our country and should be kept away from political manoeuvres. Then there was another meeting in Delhi on 11 July, This was a major meeting where the leaders who had come here earlier related and recounted their experiences and what they saw happening here. They said they were locked up in a hotel on the Boulevard and were not allowed to move about by the policemen posted outside the hotel. There was no electricity either. Even normal tourists were not allowed to enter or leave the hotel while the leaders were in Srinagar. This was indirect way of telling the hotel management not to allow Opposition leaders to stay in their hotel and a warning to other hotels. They said their experience was terrible. They informed the meeting that instructions were given to Indian Airlines to cancel some of their flights to Srinagar by which the Opposition leaders had planned to fly to Srinagar to participate in some political protest meetings. The plea advanced was that Srinagar being under curfew it would not be possible for passengers to leave the airport. This meeting at Delhi was historic and unprecedented because 19 Opposition parties and four Chief Ministers of non-Congress ruled States, were present. They expressed unreserved support. This was a real and tangible expression of their solidarity with the people of Kashmir in their hour of crisis and we will never forget it. On 12 July, four Chief Ministers of the non-Congress ruled States, walked out from the National Development Committee meeting, because the Kashmir situation was not allowed to be discussed.

The Opposition parties also presented a memorandum to the President. Among other things it mentioned repression let loose on the people of Kashmir by the Shah Government. It also stated that the Governor had acted in a partisan manner and therefore he should be recalled. They also pleaded for the immediate removal of the illegal government headed by Mr. G.M. Shah. It further demanded dissolution of the J & K Legislative Assembly and fresh elections in this State so that people are

able to give their verdict freely and unreservedly.

The national opposition leaders after their first meeting in Delhi after my dismissal, sent a joint letter to me expressing their solidarity with me, in the following words : "Your leadership and conduct have made an immense contribution in furthering the cause of national integration. This was not to the liking of Mrs. Gandhi who seeks to divide the nation. Her present action only helps the forces of disruption and disintegration". The letter further recorded strong protest "against the blatant action" of the State Governor in dismissing the duly elected government and installing a "puppet" government. "In doing this, the Prime Minister has struck a blow to all norms of democracy and on the federal polity itself. We, in the Opposition parties, stand solidly with you, the National Conference and the people of Jammu & Kashmir in this hour of turmoil."

The Opposition parties and their leaders have variously described my dismissal as follows :

CPI (M) : "Undemocratic"

Lok Dal : "Big blow to democracy"

Janata Party : "Patently unconstitutional and immoral step"

Indian Union Muslim League : "Motivated and undemocratic".

Rashtriya Sanjay Manch : "Totally undemocratic"

Congress (S) : "Desperate undemocratic act by Governor"

All India Forward Bloc : "Negation of people's verdict"

Congress (J) : "Outrage against people"

D. M. K. : "Antipeople"

CPI : "Most unconstitutional and undemocratic"

BJP : "Assault on democracy. Command performance at behest of Delhi"

Telegu Desam : "Partisan act"

Democratic Socialist Party : "Black act and arrogant use of power"

West Bengal Govt : "Flagrant breach of all norms of parliamentary democracy"

Shri Jagjivan Ram : "Unconstitutional and illegal"

Shri Raj Narain : "Unscrupulous and authoritarian action"

Shri Karpoori Thakur : Deterimental to country's unity and integrity"

Shri Jyoti Basu : "A blatant attack on democracy and parliamentary system"

Shri R. K. Hegde : "Act of blind power"

The independent National Press also reacted strongly to the event. Hardhitting editorials were published which clearly showed that we had an objective, free press, by and large. Some of their views were :

Indian Express : Dangerous gamble. "Clearly illegal and a Fascist plot"

Pratap : "Don't set Kashmir on fire"

Times of India : "Should have been avoided"

Tribune : Scant regard for democratic norms"

Matrubhumi : "Black Chapter of Kashmir"

Daily Telegraph : Ghost of 1953 Resurrected"

INFA "Shocking and scandalous"

Financial Express : "Unwelcome"

Kalki, Madras : "Murder of Democracy"

Statesman : "Delhi does it again"

Hind Samachar : "Unfortunate"

Deccan Herald : "Blow to Democratic Institutions"

Economic Times : Undemocratic decision"

Different quarters have advanced their own reasons for my dismissal. In the following pages I will deal with them.

Confrontation

I never wanted confrontation with the Centre. However some influential persons in the Centre and the Congress party had opted for it even before the general elections in Jammu and Kashmir in June 1983. I was therefore forced into a situation which took on all the dimensions of a confrontation just because these ambitious power-hungry individuals propelled the policy in that direction. Immediately after the elections, at a public meeting in Iqbal Park in Srinagar on 7 June, I extended my hand in friendship and cooperation, and repeated it so often later, saying that the State and the Centre have to work together hand in hand for prosperity and progress in the country. But the Congress was smarting under defeat and were so bitter that they continued to disregard my efforts at rapprochement. I told the Governor, Mr. B.K. Nehru, so many times to inform Delhi that I was not interested in these periodic snipings, because I wanted peace in Jammu and Kashmir. I further told him that now that people had given me a massive mandate, and Delhi should not withhold legitimate help that I needed to tackle the problems facing the people. But the small coterie of interested persons both in Srinagar and Delhi, did not allow bridges to be built between us. Coloured and highly doctored reports were presented to Mr. Gandhi about happenings in Jammu and Kashmir. Mrs. Gandhi on her return from the United States, in reply to a question about us said: "We will see how they behave", instead of sportingly accepting defeat and extending her hand in friendship and cooperation, like I had done a few days earlier. Later I went to Delhi a number of times to meet her. Each time I was told that she was preoccupied, too busy and not available to receive me. I would wait a day or two and then return to my State for I could not stay indefinitely in Delhi. My Ministers also used to go to Delhi and meet concerned Ministers who would at that

time assure them of action but then nothing would move. Thus projects were not cleared, essential supplies were not ordered to be despatched, funds were not allocated in time, and the like. Sometime, they were told that our State had received more than our requirement. Such means were adopted to increase our difficulties and to make our position before our own people, difficult. Sometimes, we were told to make-do with our own resources. I am thankful to my people who bore various difficulties with fortitude and patience, whether it was shortage of power, food or fall in tourism. The Centre continued to be on the warpath. A recent instance is that of Mrs. Gandhi's visit to Ladakh in June last. I consulted the Governor on the question of protocol. I was told that the Governor does not have to go to Leh to receive the Prime Minister but it is imperative for the Chief Minister to receive her when she visits any part of the State. When I reached Leh, the Governor telephoned me there to say that I should return to Srinagar because according to him, she was going to Ladakh on party work. I lost my temper and countered "How can she be on party work when she is using an IAF plane and is addressing army jawans, visiting the border areas and also visiting the Military Hospital to meet the injured who had been brought there after the recent clash in the Karakorams". As President of the Congress Party she could not do any of those things. Even then I was told to take a helicopter and fly back to Srinagar before she lands in Leh. I then telephoned Delhi and told them that it is not a question of Farooq Abdullah meeting Mrs. Gandhi but a State Chief Minister wanting to meet the Prime Minister and apprising her certain important matters. I also said that the Prime Minister will have to meet me as long as she is on my territory. I wanted to tell her of some of our pressing problems. When she arrived at Leh she was cold towards me but later I went and saw her and spent about half an hour with her. I told her about all the developments that had taken place in the recent past. I informed her about the measures taken by my Government for development in Ladakh and matters concerning the status of the Scheduled Tribes for Ladakhis. I also briefed her about the points which she did not know much. Earlier she had made some statements at the public meeting which had no relationship with reality; this astounded me. It was not befitting for her to talk half-truths. This was

another proof that she had decided to be on warpath and that Delhi was in no mood to settle differences with me.

The Union Home Minister, Mr. P.C. Sethi, was always very nice to me. He was soft and used to listen patiently. My own reading of the situation was that Mr. Sethi was not in command but that the Home Ministry was controlled and directly run from 1, Safdarjang Road. His voice did not matter much. Mr. Sethi in private always used to tell me how impressed he was with the performance of my Government, based on reports he was getting periodically, from his own sources. I was bewildered. Here was the Prime Minister accusing us of not doing anything while her Home Minister talked of good reports. The Minister's speeches and statements and Congress propaganda was responsible for scaring away tourists by giving the impression that there was large-scale lawlessness and violence in Jammu and Kashmir. No amount of assurances given by my Government and by me personally, were accepted in view of the barrage from the other side.

My Government's policies, were neither anti-national nor anti-people which could have accentuated the confrontation between Delhi and Srinagar. By and large conditions all over the State were stable and peaceful. No doubt there was a decline in the tourist traffic and there was power shortage, yet when we explained this to our people they accepted them and were satisfied. Sometimes we had a problem of food. The rice supplied by the Food Corporation of India was not liked by people. The attitude of the Central Government was not very friendly or even helpful towards our problems and hardly any effort was made to help solve them.

The differences between the State and the Central Government on the appointment of the Chief Justice of the High Court of Judicature here, was said to have aggravated the confrontation. I do not agree with this. In this connection we requested Delhi to transfer a Chief Justice to Jammu and Kashmir but one who will be able to stay a full-term not as a stop-gap arrangement for a few months only. The one they had in mind, had only 11 months to retire. We felt this was not correct and we told them so. We had an acting Chief Justice who could have been made a permanent Chief Justice here. Any outside Judge would take some time to understand our problem,

our ways, our social complexities and behaviour. But when Delhi insisted we finally did agree to their proposal primarily because I did not want any confrontation with the Centre.

Another issue which may have had something to do with misunderstandings with Delhi, was one pertaining to status of Scheduled Tribes, for Ladakhis. This was so because Mrs. Gandhi had been saying that Delhi had cleared the matter but Fraooq Abdullah was dragging his feet. The correct position is like this. First, if I did not want to grant them this concession then I would have taken the same stand as the previous Government. Soon after I became Chief Minister I visited Ladakh and told members of the Leh Action Committee and also a public meeting that I had absolutely no objection to this status being granted to all Ladakhis whether in Leh or Kargil Districts. Some years ago Mrs. Gandhi through her Home Minister then, Giani Zail Singh, had written to my father that there were some other people who may also be given this concession; these were Gujjars, Bakerwals, Gadis, Sansis and others. During electioneering in 1983, Mrs. Gandhi assured people in Rajouri and Poonch Districts that if the State Government recommended any special category of people, their cases would be considered favourably by the Central Government. Soon after I was told about it, I sent another communication to the Central Government in which we requested early action to be taken to grant this status to the Ladakhis and also to consider other categories mentioned by Mrs. Gandhi earlier. I kept on waiting but received no reply from Delhi. After many months we were called to Delhi. Our delegation including the Chief Secretary and the Law Secretary met the Union Home Minister, Mr. Sethi, the Home Secretary, Mr. Wali and others. It transpired that Article 342 of the Indian Constitution had to be extended to Jammu and Kashmir before the Scheduled Tribes status could be granted to anyone in this State. I agreed to the holding of a mini census of concerned people and the area for proper consideration of their cases. Our Law Department was of the view that it could be granted even without extending this particular Article to J & K. However, we decided to accept the Home Ministry's point of view and to the extension of this Article of the Indian Constitution to Jammu and Kashmir State after the mini census had been taken. But thereafter the Central Government did not take another

step towards this and yet all the blame for the delay was heaped on me. It seems this was another handy issue to beat us with and to show that Farooq Abdullah was not cooperative. This served another purpose. A strategic part of our State, was to be kept in discontent and dissatisfied with Farooq Adbullah and his Government. Mrs. Gandhi was wrongly informed about this matter and at my Leh meeting with her on 11 June 1984. I gave her the correct picture. I would like to know why no step has been taken in the past few months to grant this status to the Ladakhis, now that they have the "pliable" Shah Government which is in existence because of their mercy. But even the Ladakhis have ceased to agitate for. Has the Leh Action Committee been disbanded by the Congress Party? It is obvious that it was being used as a political weapon against me.

My relations with Mrs. Gandhi certainly played an important role in the developments culminating in my dismissal. When you look back to the thirties, you will find the nascent beginning of the relationship between the Sheikh and Nehru families. My father, Sheikh Mohammed Abdullah and Pt. Nehru over the years grew fond of each other though there were times when they differed politically. The two families came to know one another and developed good and deep personal and social relations. It was because of this perspective that when I came to power it was with the blessings of Mrs. Gandhi. These relations gradually deteriorated due to political reasons and wrong reports being fed to her. Mrs. Gandhi and the colleagues of Sheikh Sahib were not in favour of Mr. G.M. Shah succeeding Sheikh Sahib because they felt that this would be injurious for national integration. I was therefore brought into the Government as Health Minister during Sheikh Sahib's lifetime. I had earlier been invested with National Conference Presidentship by the will of the People whom Sheikh Sahib had consulted at Hazratbal. The crowds had approved my taking over the party leadership by thousands, raising their hands in affirmation. This of course, was without any help from Mrs. Gandhi. In June 1982, it was felt that in view of the deteriorating health of Sheikh Sahib, something should be done so that problems do not crop up on his passing away. The decision was taken to induct me into the Government. Mr. G.M. Shah, who was a member of the cabinet, resigned on this issue. His eyes were set on chief

ministership, whether people wanted him or not. On the sad demise of Sheikh Sahib, the Cabinet requested the Governor to appoint me as the Chief Minister. This had the approval of Mrs. Gandhi. Things seemed to move on, though haltingly. I did not relish the idea of becoming a chief minister without the people expressing their wish through elections, and hence I wanted to hold elections as early as possible. I informed Mrs. Gandhi of my desire to hold elections almost immediately. She told me that Election Commission had to be given 45 days' notice and by then it would be end of November, and some areas will get snowbound. I was therefore dissuaded not to insist on elections then.

In March 1983 or so they started talking of an electoral understanding for forthcoming elections. For that I went to Delhi for preliminary talks with Rajiv Gandhi and Krishan Chander Pant. When the plan was unfolded to me I felt that such a major decision should not be taken by me alone but that the other leaders of the Party should be consulted. I wanted to consult the Working Committee of the National Conference, to see what their views were. I flew to Srinagar and discussed the matter with my senior colleagues. I returned to Delhi with some of these colleagues. Things then became clear to us that if we agree to an alliance or a coalition with the Congress, the National Conference would have to take a back seat and gradually be wiped out. The opinion crystallised that we should go through the elections on our own in truly democratic traditions. That was the first breaking point. For this the Congress never forgave me, for they wanted to win elections in Kashmir riding on our backs. They felt that just as Mrs. Gandhi could take any decision and there would be no dissent, I should also disregard the views of my colleagues and accept Congress' offer. The decision that was made by our party was consistent with the views of Sheikh Abdullah who had always wanted that the National Conference should stand on its own and retain its identity. This would have been seriously jeopardised if we had gone in for an electoral alliance on the lines suggested by the Congress. Then came the elections. These were bitterly contested. I had earlier told Mrs. Gandhi in the Raj Bhavan in Jammu in the presence of Governor Nehru that I wanted a free and fair election. I told her that we would go with honour if we were rejected by our

step towards this and yet all the blame for the delay was heaped on me. It seems this was another handy issue to beat us with and to show that Farooq Abdullah was not cooperative. This served another purpose. A strategic part of our State, was to be kept in discontent and dissatisfied with Farooq Adbullah and his Government. Mrs. Gandhi was wrongly informed about this matter and at my Leh meeting with her on 11 June 1984. I gave her the correct picture. I would like to know why no step has been taken in the past few months to grant this status to the Ladakhis, now that they have the "pliable" Shah Government which is in existence because of their mercy. But even the Ladakhis have ceased to agitate for. Has the Leh Action Committee been disbanded by the Congress Party? It is obvious that it was being used as a political weapon against me.

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people but we would come with honour if they voted us to power.

The Election Commission announced the schedule of dates for the elections to the Legislative Assembly. The polling was to take place on 5 June 1983. The Legislative Assembly was dissolved on 18 April.

The Congress in Kashmir is known for its tricks. They wanted to create bitterness and surcharge the atmosphere before Mrs. Gandhi visited Kashmir to open the election campaign of her party. They contrived to start a fire in their party headquarters, the Congress Bhavan, putting the blame on us. Later when she addressed a public meeting in Iqbal Park and the attendance was thin, the local congressmen were able to convince her that Farooq Abdullah and his partymen had prevented people from coming to her meeting. I may tell you that at no time did we dissuade people not to go or asked shopkeepers to pull their shutters down and observe a hartal as a mark of protest against her. If the Congress can prove this I will quit politics. Her partymen, to malign us further, managed to strip one or two at the far end of the meeting, after she had left the pandal. This was conveyed to her in a highly exaggerated form and she was convinced that the National Conference was responsible for this. We had absolutely no hand in it and I told her personally about it. Later when Mr. Rajiv Gandhi came to Srinagar and addressed a public meeting in Iqbal Park, my Government took precautions to avoid any unpleasant incident or violence. The police arrested a large number of Congressmen, on the spot with stones, knives, acid bottles and the like. They were later released on bail which were offered by well-known Congress workers I told this to Mrs. Gandhi and that such things were organised by her partymen to malign us before her. However she continued to believe that the National Conference was behind it. This was another bitter blow to our relationship. It was a bitter and surcharged atmosphere in which my Government had to function. In January 1984, Mrs. Gandhi's anger against me had reached a level of paranoia. I do not believe in personal vendettas. I had nothing personal against Mrs. Gandhi. She had been a family friend and she continues to be one as far as we are concerned. Our differences were on account of the attitude of her Government towards my Government and myself. Against

this my conduct has been correct and candid though she had refused my gifts from time to time. In such manner she tried to convey her unhappiness.

The Resettlement Bill, was what created initial misunderstandings. The Bill—the Jammu and Kashmir Grant of Permit for Resettlement in (or Permanent Return to) the State—had been passed by the two Houses of Legislature during Sheikh Sahib's time, and since then was with the Governor awaiting his assent. No one had the guts to send it back to the Legislative Assembly for reconsideration, during his lifetime. They were sitting on the Bill as if waiting for him to vanish from the scene. It was almost a secret weapon with them to confront the successor and make him uncomfortable from the very beginning. On the ninth day of my taking over as Chief Minister, the Bill was sent by the Governor to the Deputy Speaker of the Assembly. I pleaded with the Governor to hold on to the Bill till I had firm grip over the Administration and we were able to settle down to normal business. I even told him that advice given to by Delhi was politically misplaced and wrong. I further informed him that if the Bill came back for reconsideration there was no course that I could adopt other than getting it passed again. It transpires that they wanted to put me into a politically difficult position. But since the explicit orders had come from Delhi through Makhan Lal Fotedar, this had to be done. It was a clever move because if the Bill was passed by the Assembly, people in the rest of the country would misunderstand me and if I did not get it through, then the people in Kashmir would go against me. The Bill was passed. I however told the House, that the President could refer it to the Supreme Court for its opinion and if that was done I gave the assurance that the State Government would not implement it till the Supreme Court gave its opinion. I also said that I had no intention of doing anything which would harm the interests of the nation. Legal opinion was that even if Bill became law and was implemented it would not lead to anti-national activity. Mrs. Gandhi herself had said that there was no need to have this law since the Central Government had been allowing people to come from across the Line of Control and settle here after a thorough scrutiny. I told Mrs. Gandhi that in that case the Bill will not increase any threat to the country's security and integrity, for law will permit only

those to come from across who were allowed by the Central Government who alone were authorised to give visas. We have stringent checks. We have our own CID which sends its reports and then there is the Indian Intelligence which has its own methods of finding out the antecedents of future settlers. Both these reports are critically examined before any visa is issued. It is totally baseless to say that lakhs of people will come from Pakistan and settle down here. With passage of time it became clear that Congress wanted to use it to frighten the Hindu voters in the Jammu region at election time. At the time of electioneering even Mrs. Gandhi used this as an election slogan. The Supreme Court has still not given its opinion whether the Bill or any provision thereof, is constitutionally invalid. I therefore refrain from saying anything more.

The differences between Srinagar and Delhi, were fuelled by some senior members of our National Conference. Soon after I took over as Chief Minister I decided to jettison old ministers of Sheikh Sahib's Cabinet and pick up new faces. There were two reasons for it. Most of the Colleagues of Sheikh Sahib, over the years had earned a reputation which was not very flattering. Even in his lifetime, Sheikh Sahib had taken letters of resignation from them and this shows that Sheikh Sahib had intended to drop all or some of them but due to his failing health he did not do it. I felt that as a new Chief Minister I should take some steps which would prove to my people that I meant business and that I wished to start with a clean slate. So I took people in confidence at the Iqbal Park before I formed my Council of Ministers. I told them that if they wanted me to be the Chief Minister then I should have a free hand in choosing my Ministers. I received full support from them. Then I announced that I intended to drop all the old Ministers and take new faces. I was lucky that the people acclaimed it, applauded and appreciated this. They were very surprised and they considered it a gift they never expected. I was able to get rid of all of them in one stroke. The second reason for the change was that I was certain that the old colleagues of my father would try and dominate me and wash away whatever good I wanted to do. I have been asked why did I not take legal action against some old Ministers since I had publicly announced that they were being dropped because of their reputation. I am **not** vindictive by

nature and if I had sent them to court I may have been accused of taking revenge. Later, however, my Government set up the Kotwal Commission to look into some of the land deals made by certain former Ministers and also enacted two Ordinances to curb corruption. Soon I faced problems in connection with the Kotwal Commission. We had come to know of some dubious deals of land in Anantnag where a residential colony was to be set up for poor people who were supposed to get plots for amounts around Rs. 4,000. It had become known that large amounts of money had been paid for land forming the Colony, to benefit the owners and some ex-ministers were responsible for this. This pushed up the price of a piece of land to nearly Rs 40,000. Could a poor man afford it? I felt that the Commission should look into these land deals so that people would get to know where the blame lies. Feeling panicky, ex-minister Mr. D.D. Thakur rushed to the Supreme Court and secured a stay order on the plea that Mr. Kotwal had always been against him and would therefore be biased. The due process of law was stalled and we never progressed in the right direction. Then there were other individuals still involved in the Administration and they also worked to frustrate the functioning of the Commission. We thus lost precious time. The Governor had issued two Ordinances to curb corruption. I thought this was essential for putting down corruption which was prevalent here no less than in the rest of country. Bureaucratic and other delays held up the implementation of the anti-corruption laws. It is wrong to say that I soft-peddaled the investigation against the former Ministers in the hope that they may come round and lend me political support. Their political support would have been very costly for me; I never hobnobbed with them. I thought it was better to be straight and face the people because they are the ones who hold the key to power. If I had wooed those individuals I would have lost the real thing—the people. This surely was not the beginning of my serious differences with Mr. G.M. Shah. The serious problem with Shah Sahib was that he wanted to become the Chief Minister at any cost and therefore there was no question of reconciliation with him till I offered my head to him. I have not spoken to him for over two years. Never did I discuss politics with him except once when my first Cabinet was being formed when he asked to be made Deputy Chief Minister.

Simultaneously he wanted me not to include his own nephew. Mr. Ghulam Mohidin Shah. I could not accept either of these suggestions because then I may not have been able to function even for a day.

Mr. D.D. Thakur had no doubt supported me against Mr. Shah in the struggle for succession. This may have been for his own long-term plans. He wanted me to send him as a member of the Rajya Sabha. This he had tried even earlier during Sheikh Sahib's time. I found there was no seat from Jammu available at that time but I told him that whenever a seat from Jammu fell vacant I will help him to go. To help him to start his law practice at Supreme Court, I gave him my own flat in New Delhi which had been earlier allotted to me as an MP. He has been living in it since then. I did all this to make him comfortable. It now transpires that he never really wanted to go to Delhi; he always wanted to be a Minister here and wield maximum power. I also later found that he was a difficult man to deal with and to satisfy. He brought far more discredit to my father than he served him. His continuance with me would not have helped me to improve my image. The break came when he realised that he could not become a Minister with me as the Chief Minister. With this he changed all his plans to pursue his ambition. This became evident from the subsequent events. He soon forgot his animosity with Mr. G.M. Shah because he was prepared to give him the position he desired. At present though he is Deputy Chief Minister, he virtually functions as the CM and his decisions are final. It could not have come about without indication from Delhi. Mr. Thakur had served Delhi well and truly, first in bringing Mr. Shah and Begum Shah round into the parlour of Congress and then subverting and changing the loyalties of some legislators here. It is interesting to know that before the Congress party withdrew support from Sheikh Sahib in 1975, Mr Thakur concentrated on persuading and pressing Sheikh Sahib to join Congress party on any terms. Again when the Congress was defeated and Janata came to power, he was the first man who came to Sheikh Sahib with the plea to join hands with Janata even when the State was under Governor's rule. He wanted the National Conference to become a wing of the Janata Party. Later he switched his loyalties and became

Mrs. Gandhi's man. He obviously does not believe in fixed loyalties.

As soon as the announcement about holding the general elections was made in April 1983, pressure started building up around me to foist and force certain individuals on me. My sister Khalida Shah was adamant and anxious that I take some of Shah Sahib's cronies. She tried to put all her weight in favour of former ministers, Mohammed Ashraf Khan, Mohammed Dilawar Mr. Hissamudin Bandey and Ghulam Nabi Kochak, through my mother, who is patron of the National Conference. In some of the cases I put my foot down because they were not liked by people, I said. They would bring bad name to the party and we might even lose the seats contested by them, I told her. Since ours is not a dictatorial party so I was overruled by the High Command to give party mandate to some of them but when it came to Mr. Kochak's name, I put my foot down saying that enough was enough and this I would not accept. On this issue I was even prepared to resign as party President; when their names were announced at a public meeting, there was strong reaction from the gathering and some even said "Farooq is no different; he is bringing back discredited persons". I was ashamed and I told my mother, "Here you are, I told you this would happen". Those who were not selected as party candidates or later lost in elections, did not forgive me. They got on to the Shah bandwagon.

In the selection of candidates we made many mistakes, even blunders which proved to be very costly later. I do hope next time we will avoid making such mistakes. Those who were foisted on me included, Sheikh Jabbar, Hissamudin Bandey, Mohammed Ashraf Khan, Mohammed Dilawar Mir, Abdul Khalil Johar, Sanaullah Dar, Mr. Ghulam Mohammed Bhaderwahid had to be selected because from Indarwal constituency no other suitable candidate was forthcoming. There was resentment against him all over. The man from Tangmarg was not personally known to me. In Mehndar there was bitter rivalry between Lal Mohammed Sabir and Rafiq Hussain Khan. How are they going to solve and settle their disputes now that they are in the Shah Camp? I made a mistake in selecting Mirza Mehboob Beg. Another mistake was nominating Smt. Gurbachan Kumari Rana and Smt. Khemlata Wakhloo to the Assembly.

A lot of dust was raised on account of my coming closer to Moulvi Mohammed Farooq, the Mirwaiz of Kashmir, especially as he was known to be against participation in elections. I have looked at this from a totally different angle, not just elections. The problem is the City of Srinagar where in a part, his supporters are concentrated. For 52 years bitter rivalries have existed between the followers of Sheikh Abdullah and Moulvi Yusuf Shah (Moulvi Farooq's uncle, who was Mirwaiz before him). The supporters of these two leaders were known as "Shers" and "Bakras". Bitter fighting used to take place, acid would be thrown, and people were beaten up rather badly. Such happenings would promote hatred and create bitterness in the entire city. Since I returned from England I had been promoting the idea of burying the hatchet so that people do not fight among themselves and dissipate energies just because they belong to one faction or the other. We may agree or disagree but in a democratic set-up one does not have to throw stones and resort to violent methods. I have always been against violence and violent methods to settle scores. I had discussed this matter with him and others. Then came an opportunity, that of elections; Moulvi Farooq decided to support National Conference candidates in preference to the Congress, because he had decided that his party, the Awami Action Committee would not directly participate in elections. I was thankful to him for he did not ask for anything in return. His support was totally unconditional. I would like to make it clear that this was not an electoral alliance and the question of my accepting or supporting his political stand did not arise. It was god-sent gift that we were able to achieve peace in Srinagar after such a long time. This also saved us deployment of thousands of policemen around the city. This became necessary also because the Election Commission had decided to have one-day poll all over the State and this stretched our police force still further. My Government asked them for an additional 29 battalions of Central forces but we got much less. The Congress make this out to be a case of electoral alliance between a nationalist party and communal elements. If it were so then Congress stalwarts like Arun Nehru, Mohammed Shaffi Qureshi and Mufti Mohammed Syed would not have gone after Moulvi Farooq with bags of

money, to throw his weight behind Congress, If Congress goes to him, he is nationalist and patriotic but if he prefers the National Conference to the Congress, he overnight becomes communal and secessionist. It seems that anyone including the devil himself is a nationalist if he sides with and supports the Congress but all those who oppose it are anti-national and unpatriotic. It is certain that the Congress used this to tarnish my image before the nation, to make out that I had not hesitated to forge an electoral alliance with a communal and anti-Indian party which questioned (?) even Kashmir's accession to India. I would like to make clear that I do not consider Moulvi Farooq or his party, the Awami Action Committee as anti-national. As recently as July 1983 the AIR broadcast excerpts of Moulvi Farooq's speech saying that he is as much as Indian as Mrs. Gandhi. I am surprised that till my Government was dismissed they never accepted him as an Indian. Even the Governor, Mr. Jagmohan in his report to the President to justify my dismissal, has said that Moulvi Farooq is not anti-national, but is as patriotic as anyone else. Against this a few months earlier, in January 1984, Delhi had asked me to arrest Moulvi Farooq and his principal supporters and thus create another problem when I was already facing the wrath of the Congress both in Kashmir Valley and Jammu. Another reason for my refusal was that they had done nothing which warranted such an action. He had not broken law and order or indulged in anything subversive.

I do not claim credit for the change that the Governor affirms has come in the attitude and views of Moulvi Farooq, but I certainly deserve appreciation for bringing peace to the city of Srinagar by ending the Sher-Bakra conflict which had from time to time for the past 52 years vitiated the atmosphere here. Our battle is common, that of building our economy and the future of our people. Then why should we dissipate our energies in futile pursuits.

Along with this improvement of relations in Srinagar, which was not to the liking of the Congress (I), the fact should not be lost that Congressmen change their tune when it suits their purpose. It needs to be disclosed that some influential Congressmen close to Mrs. Gandhi and some local Congress leaders had approached Moulvi Farooq requesting him to

extend support to the Congress in its election battle. Till that time Moulvi Farooq was considered to be patriotic and nationalist but when he tried to turn a new leaf, bury the hatchet and support the National Conference he was dubbed as anti-national and secessionist. What Logic !

Now that we are on the subject of national loyalties, let me tell you why the Congress tried to play up my alleged links with the Kashmir Liberation Front of the United Kingdom. The allegation was first aired by Mufti Mohammed Syed, the JKPCC President. I gave numerous explanations inside the Legislative Assembly, outside in public meetings and to the Press, but the Congress continued to harp on it. They even got some old photographs of 1974, published in February-March 1984, as if these were taken recently. They refused to accept my version since this was part of the bigger plan of a concerted campaign to discredit me in the eyes of the entire nation as anti-national, in the hope that something will stick.

In 1974 when I was in England, I was invited by the Plebiscite Front office in the UK to visit Pakistan-Occupied Kashmir. They sent a delegation to see me in London and invited me to attend a special session of the Plebiscite Front at Mirpur (POK), though I was not formally a member of Plebiscite Front. I asked them the reason for this invitation. They explained that since negotiations were going on between Sheikh Abdullah and Mrs. Gandhi for a probable accord, they wanted the feelings of the people of Pakistan-Occupied Kashmir to be known first-hand and to be conveyed to my father by me. I arrived in Pakistan at the invitation of the Plebiscite Front and then was taken to Occupied Kashmir. The Convention was being held in Mirpur, a town close to the Line of control, in Jammu region. They felt it was important for them that I should personally sit through the Convention and listen to their sentiments and views so that I could convey them in full, to Sheikh Sahib. They did not want the Occupied Kashmir to be forgotten in the talks going on between Sheikh Sahib and Mrs. Gandhi. On the dais I was introduced to Hashim Quereshi, Maqbool Butt and Amanullah Khan among others. Some photographs were also taken on this occasion, which were published in some newspapers published from Pakistan and the Occupied Kashmir. At that time I had no

idea about the organisation called Kashmir Liberation Front, because for me the only organisation which existed, was the Plebiscite Front in the UK. After this Convention I was taken on a week's tour to the Occupied territory. There certainly is no truth that I became a member of any of their organisations on that occasion. The Congress has alleged that on that occasion a sword was also presented to me. This is a figment of their imagination. Only a locally made gun was presented by some individual which I refused to accept because I could not take that to England with me since I had no licence and permission. I visited Kotli, Muzzfarabad and areas around Poonch before returning to Rawalpindi. Here I also met the Prime Minister of Pakistan, Mr. Z. A. Bhutto. He told me that he had been informed about my visit by the President of POK Government. He said he was glad that I had been able to visit the POK and see things for myself. I gave him my assessment of the situation there. I also told him that not much seemed to have been done towards economic development. He was anxious to know some details of the negotiations going on between Sheikh Abdullah and Mrs. Gandhi. I told him that I had no knowledge about them because I was not in constant touch with Sheikh Sahib. I visited New Delhi soon after and met Mrs. Gandhi. I told her of my meeting with Mr. Bhutto and what transpired there. Mr. P. N. Dhar, her Principal Secretary at that time was president when I met Mrs. Gandhi. From there I came to Kashmir, where a Convention of Plebiscite Front was being held and I told my father of what I had learnt in Pakistan-Occupied Kashmir.

After my meeting in Mirpur in 1974, I never met Hashim Quereshi, Maqbool Butt or Amanullah Khan, nor has been there any contact between us since then. The Congress played this up only to malign me and to add a new dimension to the confrontation of the Centre with me. It was bad enough that I was being persecuted because I had declined to side with the Congress but it was infinitely worse that a Muslim and a Kashmiri Muslim at that, was under a special obligation to establish his nationalist credentials. The murder of Mr. Mhatre, our Assistant High Commissioner in Birmingham, on 3 February 1984 shocked me no less than others. I condemned

this coldblooded murder. I personally went to Bombay to offer my condolences to the bereaved family. But nothing registered with the Congress, simply because they refused to listen to any reason. This provided grist to their propaganda mill.

As far as pro-Pakistani elements in Kashmir are concerned they have been there all along since 1947, they did not appear all of a sudden during my regime, or because of me. The real change had come over a large number of such persons during Sheikh Sahib's regime, when people here had seen how truly democratic India is, and saw democracy in action in Kashmir. This was borne out by the election results in 1977. Some facts can bear repetition. In 1972 election, five Jamait Islami members were returned to the Legislative Assembly. During Sheikh Sahib's regime between 1975 and 1977, people had experienced and breathed free and democratic air in Jammu & Kashmir. Because of this, in the 1977 elections only one Jamait Islami member could get elected to the Assembly. Things continued to improve and in the 1983 elections not even a single member of their party could claim success. It was obvious that their influence and attraction was on the wane. Against this picture see what happened in Srinagar on 14 August 1984 when the State is under Congress-supported Shah Government. Thousands of Pakistani flags appeared all over Srinagar in celebration of the Pakistan Independence Day. This may have been one way of showing anger at the undemocratic actions of the previous months. We are told that many Congress workers and Shah supporters were behind this anti-national activity. But the strangest part is that it is being pinned down on Farooq Abdullah. Their intention was to dub our movement as pro-Pakistani activity whereby they wanted to defame us in the eyes of our countrymen. Thank God they failed in this also.

They went to the ridiculous limit of blaming me for the Airbus hijacking between Srinagar and Delhi four days after my dismissal. This obviously, was politically motivated. I did not know a single hijacker. I have been told that the entire operation was masterminded by the Intelligence Bureau under instructions of some influential Congressmen close to 1, Safdarjang Road. I was told at Srinagar Airport a day or two after the event that all the hijackers had been thoroughly searched and

there was no chance of any arms being sneaked through the security checking counter. They felt that probably the arms were put in the plane at Bombay, from where it came that morning, and that the hijackers knew exactly where to find them in the plane. I was no longer in the Government. But the allegation was made further to tarnish my image that I was in collusion with the hijackers. In fact during my regime instructions had been given for strict measures to be taken to ensure that nothing like this could happen at Srinagar, Jammu and Leh airports. People have read a lot of meaning in Pakistan's refusal to hand over the hijackers to India, because then their interrogation here would bring out the truth. Soon after, there was another hijacking of a Boeing 737 as soon as it took off from Chandigarh. This plane was taken to Lahore, Karachi and then to Dubai. Referring to this, in the Parliament, a Member asked the Congress Members. "The last hijacking was pinned down on Farooq Abdullah, who are you going to pin this on, for Chandigarh is a Union Territory". For the Congress, it obviously does not matter whether the propaganda against their opponents is ridiculous or far-fetched.

Punjab and Bhindranwale

Another factor in the confrontation that was bandied about by the Congress (I) leadership and the Central Government, was my "sympathy and support" of the Sikh extremists in the Punjab. I had nothing to do with the Sikh extremists. I was not privy to their plans, at any stage. It is wrong to say that I helped to organise military training in Jammu & Kashmir. Of course, Gurmat Camps were held here as elsewhere in Himachal Pradesh, Uttar Pradesh and Punjab. According to the information given to me the inmates used to read scriptures and recite Gurbani, and were trained in wielding sticks and swords which is essential for a Sikh, prescribed by Guru Gobind Singhji. I was told the main purpose of the Camps was to make the Sikh youth more religious and to make them desist alcohol and other sinful things. These camps had been organised and held since 1981, when I was nowhere in the Government. According to the Union Home Minister in all 14 such camps had been held but only 6 had been held in Jammu & Kashmir while others were held in Himachal Pradesh, Uttar Pradesh and Punjab. They singled us out because we were the only non-Congress ruled state. Also because such false statements would help them to further tarnish my image before the nation. The minister also said that these were religious camps and no military training was imparted. And yet Congressmen have continuously gone on with this propaganda. I ask you, how can you keep it a secret if a camp is held where military training is imparted? Can you have arms training in a Gurdwara? Can you train people, raw youths at that, in 3 to 5 days in handling of arms making and throwing of bombs, or in offensive attacks? If there is rifle shooting in a Gurdwara, would no one know about it? I have proof that children of leading Sikh office-bearers of Pradesh Congress Committee, attended these camps and I am

sure that if arms training was being imparted, they too must have received it. May I know if arms training was also imparted at the Sikh camps held in Himachal Pradesh, Uttar Pradesh and Punjab? And if so, what action was taken by the Governments of those States?

So much has been made of my meeting with Bhindranwale. It can be verified from the security personnel and intelligence sleuths around the Golden Temple, when Bhindranwale lived in Guru Nanak Niwas, exactly how many times I met Bhindranwale for it has been alleged that I met him a number of times. Records will bear it that I met him only once and that also at his request. I had gone to Amritsar to keep an engagement which had been fixed sometime ago. I went to the Golden Temple to pay my respects. There I was told that Akali leaders inside would like to meet me. So I went and met them. They asked me if I represented Mrs. Gandhi. I clearly told them that I had no authority to talk on her behalf but if they wanted me to convey something to her I would certainly do that. They told me that talks between them and her emissary, Sardar Swaran Singh had failed. I felt bad on knowing this. They then discussed the Punjab situation with me. They also brought up the Akali demands, and told me where things had gone wrong. I promised that I would soon pass on the gist of the talk to Mrs. Gandhi, and do my best to get the talks started again. I told them that in my view it would be major tragedy if the talks did not get started early. Not only will the Punjab suffer but even Jammu and Kashmir would be adversely affected. I also conveyed to them my concern about the deteriorating relations between Sikhs and Hindus, which would surely spill over to my State, especially in Jammu region where there is a sizeable Sikh population. I did not want any internal strife here because that would have added further to our law and order problems which had been created by the Congress (I). I advised them to have a flexible attitude of give and take in their talks with the Central Government and Mrs. Gandhi, whenever those got started. I asked them not to be adamant on major issues. Those leaders are still alive and it can be verified from them. Among them were Sant Harchand Singh Longowal, Sardar Gurcharan Singh Tohra and Mr Prakash Singh Badal. Soon after this meeting, some Sikh youths came to me and said that

Shri Bhindranwale would like to meet me. I enquired where he was. I was told that he lived on the 5th floor of Guru Nanak Niwas. I went up and found him surrounded by hundreds young Sikhs most of whom were armed with all sorts of weapons, for his security, I was told. There was a video camera recording all the time. They seemed to have various modern gadgets to record and film all his activities. We exchanged pleasantries. In about 15 minutes that I was with him, I told him to see reason and to take to the path of negotiation rather than resort to violence. His response was neither clear-cut nor positive. I then left him. He raised the slogan "Sikh-Moslem Unity Zindabad". I told him, that Sheikh Sahib and my people in Kashmir had taught me, "Hindu Moslem Sikh Isai; Hum sab hain Bhai Bhai". I am glad to tell you that I made him repeat this with me. A report of this meeting appeared the next day in Chandigarh and Jalandhar newspapers. This was my first and last meeting with him. The photograph of him and me which Congress lackeys have talked so much about, was taken by a press photographer who later presented it to me. Since I had nothing to hide, it lay in one of the rooms in my official residence in Jammu. From Amritsar I returned to Jammu and later, when I visited Delhi and met Mrs. Gandhi I reported to her what had transpired at my meetings in Amritsar. I requested her to take the initiative to start talks to some agreed solution. Soon after this Shri Rajiv Gandhi started talks with the Akali leaders.

A lot has been made of my supposed contacts with the AISSF activists. The reality is something different. Last year I went on an official tour of Poonch and Rajouri Districts. One of the engagements fixed in Poonch town was a visit to the local Gurdwara. I was not told that at that time some student leaders were there. I did not know any of them. I had no knowledge who were the office-bearers of the All India Sikh Student Federation. I had no previous contact with anyone of them. As Chief Minister I have met so many Sikh delegations that I have lost count of them; just as I have been meeting delegations of other communities. Sikh demands in our State have not changed. These have always been for a Sikh Minister, increased representation in the Government services, Punjabi language to be at its rightful place, Sikh youth to be given employment in

proportion to their number, due admission to be granted in professional colleges like Medical, Agriculture and Engineering. There was nothing [political in these meetings. They brought their grievances to me as Chief Minister. I told them that this was not an easy thing to do in a secular setup but I promised to look into them. Never was Punjab politics brought up for discussion in these meetings.

It has been alleged that I refused to arrest Sikh extremists in Jammu & Kashmir even when the Union Home Ministry had supplied us with a list. I had meetings with the Advisor to the Punjab Governor and I asked him to provide us with names and photographs of all suspects whom they considered extremists, so that our police could keep a vigil in our state. Our Director General of Police, also had a meeting with the Punjab Governor's Advisor. I informed our Chief Secretary of my meeting with the Punjab Governor's Advisor. I asked him to pursue the matter with the Punjab Administration, vigorously, so that we are able to control any infiltration, and to apprehend those who may have come over to J & K. I also requested Punjab Govt. to supply us the information of such individuals in our state who in their knowledge were extremists. It was imperative that united action was taken by the Punjab and J & K Governments. We were not supplied this information. No pictures were sent to us. In our state, we put all the concerned agencies together under the chairmanship of the Chief Secretary for joint and concerted action. In this were put the CID, counter intelligence, the Army intelligence, the BSF etc. They used to have regular meetings every two weeks to monitor the situation and decide steps to be taken. As late as 1 July (one day before dismissing me) the Governor sent me a letter enclosing the names of some extremists. 1 July was Sunday. I was dismissed on 2 July. What action could I take? But before quitting I sent the letter to the Chief Secretary for action. I can say it categorically that no list of extremists was ever given to me before this date. In spite of all this they kept on harping on this allegation to prepare ground for my dismissal and later on to justify it. They were making efforts to poison the minds of my countrymen all over, by telling them that Farooq Abdullah is dangerous and anti-national, that is why he did not take action against the Sikh extremists even when he was told to. It was to

destroy my public image which was fast emerging on the Indian scene. The Congress and Mrs. Gandhi did not seem to have any other objective in Kashmir except to remove me from power. I deny forcefully that there was any collusion between Sikh extremists in the Punjab and us. There was no question of my extending patronage to them. This was advanced only to fuel their propaganda machine and to buttress their allegation that I was in league with pro-Pakistani and pro-Khalistani elements. If it were true the Government of India would not have hesitated to make public the evidence and to damn me in the eyes of the Indian public for ever. It would have been included in the Punjab White Paper. If these charges are made formally, I am prepared to face any court to prove my innocence.

At this stage, let me clarify that I have never sympathised or supported the concept of Khalistan. However, I have tried to look at it realistically. I have always felt that both the Hindu and Sikh communities have to live together if India is to survive. Unfortunately the vocal and more articulate Sikhs and the Central Government were heading in different directions and there was no deliberate effort to come closer and to understand each other's point of view. As an Indian, I felt that my State would suffer, in fact every State with any Sikh population, would suffer. Jammu & Kashmir would be hurt the most because first this was the only land link with the rest of the country through which flowed all traffic, whether it be of tourists or of essential supplies, and second most of our exports like fruit and handicrafts reach metropolitan cities, through Punjab. Jammu & Kashmir state therefore suffered economically very greatly. We were very concerned and therefore took an interest in getting the dialogue started. This was further taken up by Mr. Rajiv Gandhi and Sardar Amrinder Singh, at that time an influential Congress MP, but it is now learnt that nothing came out of it. The army action further aggravated the delicate situation in the Punjab and what is worse, it has alienated big chunk of the Sikhs thus making a negotiated settlement still more difficult. It is very clear that a political solution alone is the answer and that cannot come about till the Akali leadership is released and they agree to come to the negotiating table. Whenever the negotiations do get started, Hindu representatives should be involved in them otherwise the settlement arrived at would not

be lasting. Every good-intentioned Indian should help to create the climate of goodwill and amity so that possibility of the dialogue becomes a reality. Why does the Government and the Congress party feel that the Opposition is either not interested or is unnecessarily stalling an agreement whenever a glimmer of hope appears on the horizon? A solution of the Punjab problem would surely become easier if the National Opposition is actively associated with the dialogue. I do not want another partition of the country, one has done enough damage, but integrity and unity of the country can be had and be maintained only by consent and agreement and not by force. A vast number of Sikhs are reasonable and highly patriotic people and I am sure that they would throw their weight on the side of peaceful negotiations and communal amity.

Another reason advanced for my dismissal, was the charge that I allowed Jammu & Kashmir territory to be used for illegal traffic of arms and ammunition from Pakistan and Punjab. This is a lie and a fabrication. I had no knowledge of any clandestine traffic or else the Punjab White Paper should have mentioned it. It is common knowledge that approximately 90 per cent of the arms captured from the Golden Temple complex, were from the Indian Ordnance factories. The borders had been sealed all round especially with Pakistan. Whether it be the international border or the Line of Control in our State, the borders are guarded and patrolled by the BSF and the Army; the State police is not posted on the borders nor are they responsible for patrolling it. If anything did slip through, the fault cannot be laid at my doors but that of the Defence and the Home Ministries. You can heap the blame of the others on my head just because I am the convenient whipping boy.

And yet another ridiculous charge against me made by the Congress, was that I had got some areas near the Line Control in Poonch and Rajouri Districts, vacated of Gujjars because they were "loyal Indians", and had settled pro-Pakistani elements. Can this be believed? Can they produce even a single Gujjar who was uprooted by me from these areas? And who were the persons I settled in those vacated lands? Would this not lead to an agitation which would have been given high pressure publicity by the Congress? I never gave any directions to move the Gujjars away from the Line of Control. This is totally

baseless and was done to paint me as anti-Indian. For them I am a Pakistani, a Khalistani, everything but an Indian. The entire charade was worked out to achieve this end but it failed to cut any ice.

Congress Campaign

The Governor has justified my ouster also on the ground that there was lawlessness earlier and the Congress workers and the nationalist elements were the victims. Could any administration sit pretty without taking action of some rowdys who happened to belong to Congress party went about beating people including, Government officers like District Development Commissioners, Magistrates, etc., and burning Government property including vehicles, obstructing road traffic, and creating disturbances, generally. Did the Congress expect me to abdicate? The Congress instigated and perpetrated all kinds of hooliganism and then got it widely published that Farooq's Government was supressing the pro-Indian elements. The official media was misused for this purpose. Is Congress the only pro-India party in Jammu and Kashmir? What are the Janata, Lok Dal, BJP, CPI, CPI (M) and others? Why is it that the Congress alone alleged that my Government was supressing dissent and all national elements? And during my period did anyone see such heavy deployment of police and paramilitary forces, as is seen presently? Were the jails as full as they are today? I imposed Section 144 for short periods in restricted areas, never for months without end. I never clamped curfew except in Jammu following Bhindranwale's death and when a clash between two communities was feared. During the Shah regime we have witnessed curfew for weeks together in Srinagar. Newspapers have said that Srinagar lived under curfew for 72 days out of the first 90 days of Shah's Government, and prohibitory orders never seem to be lifted. Under orders of Party leadership, Congress workers from time to time organised violence in different places to give the impression that law and order was out of control during my tenure as Chief Minister the fact however was, that I was subjected for

months to a campaign designed to topple my Government in which vilification by Congress (I) leaders at the Centre and in the State went hand in hand with staged street battles by Congress (I) volunteers in the State.

From the Congress quiver another arrow shot at me, was that I had raised two battalions of Armed police to absorb Sikh extremists and Muslim secessionists and known Pak agents. Yet everyone knows that selection at the time of recruitment is done by a selection committee duly constituted and not by the Chief Minister. The Committee is called the Recruitment Board. The Board was presided over by a senior IPS officer from South India, Mr. Raju. You cannot call him a secessionist of a Pak agent. In any case recruits have to go through rigorous tests laid down by the Union Home Ministry. All that my Government did was to ensure that various communities got representation, as also that different areas of the State were given an opportunity for recruitment. I wanted to make it a composite force because I wanted to avoid the experience of the UP Government in recruitment of a particular force where there is serious imbalance between two communities. These decisions had been taken during Sheikh Saheb's regime. Whatever recruitment took place during my period, was undertaken by a Recruitment Board presided over by another IPS officer, Mr. Gill, whose father was an important Congress leader in Punjab. This propaganda was started to paint me anti-national. It is common knowledge that these two Police battalions were raised by approval of the Union Home Ministry and the Planning Commission. I could not raise these battalions just because I fancied it. A need to raise additional forces was felt and after various studies and reports, the sanction of the State and Central Governments was obtained before proper recruitment started.

The Congress calls itself a secular organisation but it thinks communally. They reckoned that unless they were able to find a Moslem Imam to criticise and condemn me, the Moslems may not get convinced by its propaganda against me. So they found a pliable individual Maulana, Jameel Ahmed Ilyasi, by name. He was advertised as President of the All India Organisation of Imams. Not many Imams know of this organisation. He is a protege of the Congress Party and a man who is un-

known. They use his name whenever required. Some Urdu newspapers and one English weekly of Bombay has been used from time to time to publicise statements and articles from him. I have learnt that he told somebody recently when confronted with one such statement that he did not know anything about it. He is Imam of the mosque near the Parliament House in New Delhi and it is obvious that he is willing to oblige the ruling party for his own interests. The *Hindustan Times* dated 3 July 1984, carried extracts of a pamphlet issued by him the previous day. One would be curious to know whether this slanderous and libelous pamphlet could have been written, printed and circulated, all on 2 July, for it speaks of my dismissal as inevitable and advances the same arguments which had been trotted out against me from time to time by the Congress party. This pamphlet of Ilyasi, alleges that I have weakened the bonds of Kashmir with the rest of India. Every objective assessment will prove that during my period, due to my positive efforts, Kashmir has got closer to the rest of the country and has definitely joined the national mainstream, in a real sense. If anything, these bonds were strengthened by me. Similarly articles written by others under pseudonyms were published as part of the Congress campaign against me. By and large these did not make much impression because the saner and sensible non-partisan population refused to accept it as objective.

So much has been made of the One Day Cricket Match between the Indian XI and the West Indies XI, which was held in Srinagar on 13 October 1983. This was an important fixture for the Jammu & Kashmir Cricket Association. It was after a long and sustained effort that we had got this fixture from the Cricket Control Board of India. A vast majority of the youth in our State are interested in cricket. We also know that not many out of them can afford to travel out of Kashmir and witness an international match. That is why we were keen to have the match played here. We therefore felt very grateful to the Cricket Control Board of India for allotting this match to be played in Srinagar. To fulfill the conditions necessary for such a match, within a period of two months we were able to raise the grand structure of the Stadium in Amar Singh Club grounds. This could seat over 35,000. For this the work was

continued round the clock. It turned out to be one of the finest cricket grounds in India, according to the Manager of the West Indies Team. The backdrop is the majestic hill topped by the Shankaracharya temple and the seating stands are surrounded by a row of stately chinar trees. The setting is most picturesque. The day for the match was fixed and we were ready to receive the players. In September 1978, a three-day friendly match had been played in Srinagar between the Australian XI and the Indian team. The Jammait and the Kashmir Liberation Front from the UK, had threatened the Australians with dire consequences, if they played in Kashmir, since according to them, it was a disputed territory. The Australians nearly decided to call it off. I was the Chairman of the J & K Cricket Association at that time, and with the backing of State Government, we had to seek the intervention of the President of India, Shri Sanjiva Reddy, and the match was played without any incident. This also proved that the Kashmir Liberation Front did not exist in Kashmir. This time, it was the Kashmir Jammait Islami, which a few days earlier had said that the West Indies should not play an international match against India in Kashmir, because that would give international recognition to Kashmir being an integral part of India. So this threat was nothing new but we were determined to frustrate their attempts to blackmail us and also to show the world that Kashmir's accession to India, was final as far as we were concerned. Would the Congress Government in my place, act differently?

Proper steps were taken by the police in this regard. I called a special meeting of the police and intelligence officers and all aspects of the threat to law and order were studied and measures to be taken, decided upon. Besides other things, it was decided that every person entering the Grounds would be thoroughly frisked. Strict orders were given that nothing should be allowed to change the pleasant atmosphere. The J & K Cricket Association was able to sell a large number of tickets. The Association because of this, would be out of red, for the first time and therefore would be able to develop cricket in the State with its own resources. Never before were we able to give enough training and practice to our boys and girls, to bring them to a level where they could get into the National

XI. As the date of the match approached all sorts of rumours started circulating. One was that the match would never be allowed to be held. The other one was that there would be large-scale trouble. The Administration took note of these and measures were devised to meet the situation which may arise. Then came the day of match. It was a cold cloudy day. After the match had gone on for some time, a section of the crowd from the stands, feeling the game rather dull, started booing. Later on another section started cheering whenever a good shot was played by the West Indies players. Good fielding by the Indians, was also cheered. As the play developed, small sections from the eastern stand and also from the one western stand, started shouting. They seemed to have chosen their locations deliberately. I was informed that among them were Jammat Islami workers and many Congress workers. Even at that time, I had said that this trouble was organised by trouble makers and that the Congress workers were behind the whole thing. The Congress was very upset, even infuriated because of the success of the Opposition Conclave held in Srinagar a week earlier and this had given me tremendous publicity all over the country, even abroad. They seized this opportunity by which they would create the trouble in the stands while Jammat Islami would get the bad name. They would achieve their objective of creating the impression all over that firstly my Government was unable to control law and order and secondly the anti-national elements had become bold enough to stage such anti-Indian demonstrations. The trouble of whatever dimension there was, was highly exaggerated by a section of the press and the official media. No Pakistani slogan was raised from the stands. It is not correct that Pakistani flags were unfurled in the stands. There is no doubt that the Jammat workers had unfurled some Islamic flags, which being green with star and crescent, from a distance to a common man, looked like the Pakistani flag. It was also alleged that anti-Indian slogans had been raised. This is not true at all. Except for these two stands the crowds in other stands were orderly and well-behaved. The Governor was present most of time in the pavilion and so were many other dignitaries, some from Delhi as well. Mrs. Gandhi later alleged that Farooq Abdullah had not condemned the happenings and that even when a senior

officer had warned me, I refused to act. The truth is that whenever a match like this is held anywhere in the country, some trouble does take place. In Kanpur the crowds threw a snake in the field, in Calcutta the angry crowd nearly murdered some Indian player, because of poor play. In Delhi in the DCM Football tournament, police had to resort to firing in which some persons lost their lives. The Centre did not take much notice of these incidents, while about the Srinagar match, things were blown up to achieve political mileage against me. Doordarshan cameras were directed on those two stands while there was trouble and these parts of the TV film were screened a number of times, which is not the normal practice. They wanted to tell as many people as possible that during my regime anti-Indian sentiment in Kashmir was on the increase. So this bogey had to be raised. When the match ended it was pretty cold and the wickets had to be drawn because of the drizzle. When I presented carpets to the two teams, some players wrapped them around them because they were shivering due to the cold. If that match had not been held or had to be called off due to trouble, the Congress would have taken that to be victory of their propaganda, "look we were telling you that anti-Indian elements have the upper hand in Kashmir and that is why the match had to be cancelled." So, whether the match was held or not held, I had to get the blame, because the Congress leaders planned it that was. I am satisfied that the match was held and thousands of people were able to witness it. In the evening when members of both the teams came for the dinner, I condemned the incidents which took place in a couple of stands. I met their Captains and told them how sorry I was. Both the Captains told me that such things do happen all over the world and that they had not taken much notice of it. They asked me not to worry too much about it.

The next day I went to the University and there I addressed a meeting of students and teachers. In the presence of the Governor who was in the meeting, I condemned the incident in strong terms. It is a travesty of facts to say that my condemnation came after the Prime Minister's Press Conference on the morning of 15 October. My statement of condemnation was released to press on 14 October evening was carried by

some national dailies dated 15 October. But it was preplanned to get us condemned before the entire nation. The denial of press passes to large number of pressmen to witness the match, certainly contributed to the biased reporting which produced distorted picture of the events of the day. Unfortunately the Chairman of the J & K Cricket Association decided to centralise most of the work including the work of issuing passes, to himself. He feared that passes may be misused especially in view of the rumours of trouble expected. Records will bear me out that police acted promptly and many spectators from the stands were taken into custody. Later, when I had full report from the police, arrest of activists of anti-national political elements, were ordered. Many anti-social elements were also arrested. When this happened, the very same Congress criticised me for indiscriminate arrests and a reign of terror. Is it not lawful to release those who after investigation are found not guilty? Then why was I accused of releasing many out of those arrested earlier. In all, over 300 had been arrested in a day or two. Proper cases were registered against all those who were clearly involved in the incidents during the Cricket match.

On 19 May 1983, the headquarters of the J & K Pradesh Congress Committee, on Maulana Azad Road in Srinagar, mysteriously caught fire. The blame was laid at the door of the National Conference. It is well known that Congress workers led by Mohammed Shaffi Quereshi, had blocked the main road, in front of the office. The police tried to clear the road which resulted in an altercation. In the meantime, many Congress workers took refuge in the compound of the Congress Bhavan and from there started throwing stones on to the road where a large number of spectators had gathered. The stones were returned from outside. There is enough evidence available that this was the handiwork of their own workers, in an effort to blame the National Conference, get plenty of publicity and gain some sympathy votes. Since Mrs. Gandhi was to arrive in Srinagar two days later to start the election campaign of her party, she had to be made angry against the National Conference and Farooq Abdullah. We proved our bonafides, and promptly appointed a Judicial Inquiry Commission to probe it. The Congress fearing

that the truth will be out, went to court and secured a stay order. So the Inquiry was stalled. The Shah Administration, on orders from the Congress, dissolved the Commission of Inquiry. Even a child will tell you that just because the findings of the Commission would have gone against the Congress party, the Commission was got dissolved. But they cannot escape the truth. The Commission will be appointed again and the truth made known. Although the Congress used this incident to feed its propaganda machine against me and the National Conference they were unhappy because this failed to influence the voters of Srinagar constituency—Parliament and Assembly, both, as was evident from the results.

The Shiva Gun Factory in Jammu owned by Shri Dhirendra Brahamchari, contributed its share in worsening the relationship between Delhi and me. The Brahamchari was very close to the Prime Minister and had been given various facilities in Jammu and Kashmir by the Congress Government in the early seventies. A lot of land was given to him in Mantalai in Udhampur District, for setting up an Ashram, which now has five-star facilities, and for an airstrip, which has modern communication facilities. This is one of the few privately owned airstrips in a highly sensitive and strategic area from the defence point of view. For another airstrip near Katra, near Vaishnodevi Shrine, land for him was got from the small farmers, making them landless overnight. Many of them had filed cases but no attention seemed to have been paid to them. Later, he got a plum piece of land in Gandhinagar Colony—a posh residential area of Jammu City, where a 7-storey airconditioned Ashram is under construction. A helipad is being made on the rooftop. He is not a State's Permanent Resident, and could not have been granted any land, but due to his immense clout with Delhi he managed it somehow. He also managed to get a licence to manufacture guns in a factory that he bought in Gandhinagar Industrial Estate, in Jammu. Starting with small numbers, he secured permission to make 3,000 guns annually. When the Civil Secretariat had shifted to Jammu, in the winter of 1983-84 this Shiva Gun Factory was raided by police. Perhaps the origin of this raid was in 1, Safdarjang Road in New Delhi, because this would show me up as a political enemy who does not spare even the friends of Mrs. Gandhi, when it comes to settle scores.



Mrs Gandhi, Mr B. K. Nehru, Governor, Jammu & Kashmir and Dr Farooq Abdullah.



The Srinagar Conclave of the Opposition leaders.



Dr Farooq Abdullah addressing a public meeting soon after election results were declared, where he extended hand of friendship to the Centre.

Dr Farooq Abdullah being taken out in a procession through Srinagar streets, after election results.



Dr Farooq Abdullah talking to editors of leading National dailies, at New Delhi, when he invited them to personally observe the elections in Jammu & Kashmir.

Dr Farooq Abdullah welcomes the new Governor, Mr Jagmohan, on arrival in Jammu. The Chief Secretary Mir Nassarullah, is on the left.

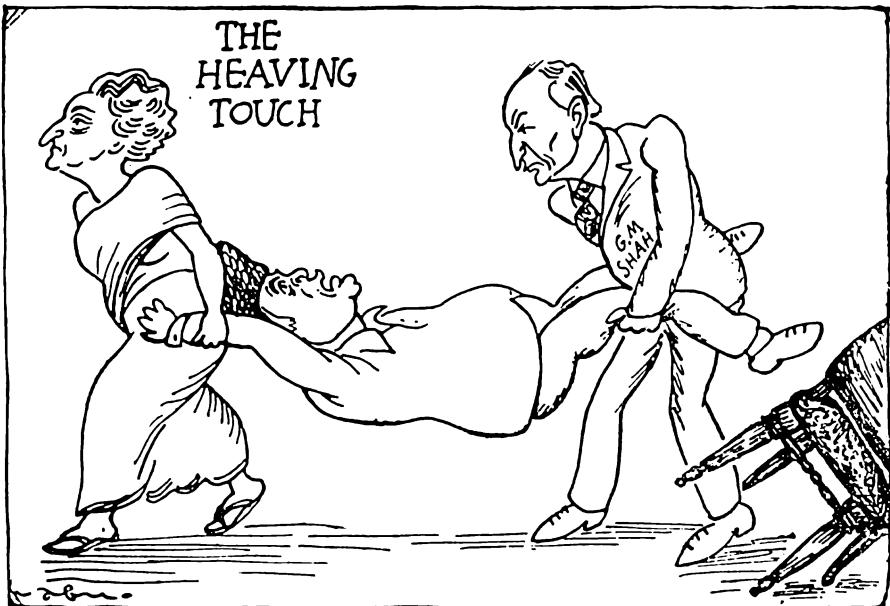


CONFIDENTLY—
HAND
IN
GLOVE



Courtesy : *The Indian Express*, 3 August, 1984

THE
HEAVING
TOUCH



Courtesy : *The Tribune*, 8 July, 1984



Courtesy : *The Statesman*, 4 July, 1984



Courtesy : *The Times of India*, 27 May, 1984

My Government here was rather careful to keep an eye on the guns being manufactured in Jammu because even a little relaxation in our vigil could have resulted in these weapons finding their way to the neighbouring Punjab, where there was plenty of trouble already. Instructions had been given that all records of the manufacturers big and small should be meticulously checked and examined where the guns were being sold and marketed.

From Jammu I had gone to Doda to attend the meeting of the District Development Board. On the way back I stopped at Udhampur to attend the Passing Out Parade of the Police Training School. I returned to Jammu late at night. The raid on the Shiva Gun Factory was made that evening. Who informed the police and what happened was not known to me at all. It was learnt later that majority of factory hands were from outside, mostly from Bihar and Uttar Pradesh. As a policy, local workers had not been paid wages for a long time, and perhaps one of them informed the police that instead of making the parts locally, parts were being brought from outside and the guns were only being assembled here. Next morning at about 7 a. m. the Brahamchari called me from Delhi and informed me that his gun factory at Gandhi Nagar had been raided by police the previous evening. He said this had been done because he was close to Mrs. Gandhi. I told him that I really had no knowledge of the raid and that I will immediately call for facts and will go by facts only. He however continued to say that the raid was to victimise him because of his closeness of the rulers. Soon after I telephoned our Director-General of Police and asked him to report to me, soon, along with the DIG, SP and DC and other officers concerned, so that I could acquaint myself with facts of the raid. With these officers I visited the factory that morning and there I was shown parts of the guns which had been imported from Spain, according to information available then. I was told that in the factory premises were 500 or so barrels, butts and firing mechanism. All that needed to be done was to put the parts together and you had the gun. I asked them if they knew how these parts had reached Jammu, since they were imported from overseas. The information that I was given was that one of the employees of the factory, hailing from outside the State, and who

had not received his wages for sometime, had passed the information to the authorities that no barrels or other parts were being manufactured in the factory. Instead the parts were being brought from outside. He further told them that these parts were being assembled and sold without having to go through the tedious processes. This way business seemed to be more lucrative; every gun sold meant a profit of thousands. I asked them if they knew how these parts were brought into our State. The factory management had nothing to show, not even excise permits for the import of parts into the State. Information was given to me that perhaps these were brought by the Brahamchari's private plane, which landed only in the IAF Technical area at Jammu Airport, where the civil police had no authority to check. A case was registered by the police and is before a Court. I hope that the true facts will come out but I have no idea of the attitude of Shah Government to this case. This is because the State Government is in existence on account of the support of Congress party. The prosecution may change its case and all the evidence collected may not to be used.

When the matter was raised in the Lok Sabha, I happened to be in the public gallery, where I learnt about the Brahamchari being indisposed. Since he had been known to me for a long time, I went to see him. There I was told that he had some heart ailment. I told him to go abroad for a thorough checkup. Neither he nor I talked about the gun factory; I had gone to see him as a personal friend.

In retrospect, I think the whole incident, the way it was manipulated, was organised by local Congress leaders at the behest of some aides of Mrs. Gandhi. Later the Brahamchari came to see me in Jammu to ask me to tell the police not to harass him but to hurry with his case. I assured him that instructions would be given to police to expeditiously complete the investigations. At that time he told me that Mrs. Gandhi had told him that since her relations with me were not friendly, I may be trying to trouble him, because he was close to 1, Safdarjang Road. I told him to go back and inform Mrs. Gandhi that I do not believe in personal vendettas. We have nothing personal against Mrs. Gandhi. We have a family friendship and this would go on whatever might happen in politics.

As I said earlier, the General Elections in Jammu and Kashmir in 1983, were the beginning of the Great Divide between the Congress and Mrs. Gandhi on one hand and the people of Kashmir and Farooq Abdullah, on the other. My information indicates that five days after the election results were announced, the Congress set-up here received orders from Delhi to start a campaign that elections had been rigged. How is it that if the elections were rigged, the Congress has given a clean chit to all the ten defecting MLAs (two are nominated, besides them). These ten MLAs were among those against whom the Congress had filed election petitions last year. We learn that the Congress plans shortly to withdraw election petitions against all the defectors. Would it not mean that their election was fair and proper and there was no rigging. Was it then, merely for slandering us, for propaganda which was based on total lies. The people here and that nation as a whole did not accept the change. It is very obvious that it was being played purely, as a political game, in which everything is considered fair. Then the Congress party tried another strategem. This was beating up of the administrative functionaries like the D.C., tehsildars, burning public property and government vehicles. They also let loose their goondas and terrorized people at large. In short, the Congress had organised a proper hooligan brigade which went on a rampage and they expected not to take action just because they were part of the ruling party at the Centre. Their bosses had thought that this way they would be able to raise a mass wave all over the country demanding the "dismissal of Farooq Abdullah". However the national opposition and most of the national press warned the Congress against this type of adventure. Hence they gave this up for another plan. This was to use some disgruntled elements in my National Conference, to work towards a division within our party. They knew that my own brother-in-law, was a highly ambitious man who had been thwarted in his plans by my installations. They also knew his other weaknesses and taking advantage of all those, they started working on him through the most-willing Devi Dass Thakur. They also knew that Mr. Shah had in his pay a band of goondas. Through them they made it known to some other disgruntled but ambitious MLAs that Congress would be willing to lend support if they would

jump over to the Shah bandwagon. With liberal flow of money from Delhi and even open support by the Congress party, a gathering of a few hundred individuals was got together in Srinagar in May 1984, after three unsuccessful attempts. At this, they elected my sister, Begum Shah, as "President" of the "Asli National Conference" and "expelled" me from the Presidentship and even the primary membership of my own party. How ridiculous! The people of Kashmir refused to accept this proposition. Out of 47 MLAs belonging to the National Conference, only one, Sheikh Abdul Jabbar, expressed his allegiance to the new rump organised by Mr. Shah. The people of Kashmir gave a befitting reply three days later when thousands turned up at the Convention of our party, the National Conference. This Convention, among other things, expelled all those who had attended the Shah show. The wooing of my MLAs then started in earnest. That is the time when the Congress directly came into the picture and meetings were held between some MLAs and Congress intermediaries. Offers of ministership and large amounts of money and even flats in Delhi, were reportedly made, on behalf of the Congress High Command. Shades of Moilly tapes! The Congress offered unconditional support of 26 members to Mr. Shah, when one of them Sardar Rangil Singh was abroad. Were his signatures forged or did his personal opinion not matter?

For Mrs. Gandhi and her aides, all their plans for Kashmir had got upset with our success at the polls. This infuriated her and there were lesser fries who had many scores to settle. They set to work with zeal. Look at the views Mrs. Gandhi held before the elections. In Jammu in April 1983, she had told me in the Raj Bhawan that the National Conference would win elections hands down, as per her reports. Later when Mr. Jyoti Basu met her and asked her that since she was talking of rigging in the Kashmir elections, how many more seats would have the Congress won, if there were no rigging. She told him, "Oh! probably one or two". Mr. Basu then told her that just for one or two seats, she had been creating confusion and alleging large-scale rigging.

For this confusion, some sections of press, the Doordarshan and All India Radio were wholly responsible. To start with my relations with the press as a whole, had been good and

cordial. When I became the Chief Minister, I used to meet members of the Press freely and frequently. I was easily accessible and was quite frank with them. I even got a Press room set up in the Secretariat, so that they could freely and regularly meet the Ministers and get to know what the Government was thinking or doing. For elections a special Press room was set up in Srinagar to provide full and quick information to the Press. This Press room received praise not only from the Press but also from the Election Commission officials. The relations with the Press became strained because before and during the elections, some representatives here of the national Press and news agencies and a few local newspapers especially those who were under the direct patronage and influence of the Congress, started a malicious campaign of slander against me and my Party. Even the Government was not spared. All sorts of incorrect and sometimes baseless reports were put out. And since most of them were sensational the newspapers used to lap them up and display them prominently. Such reports certainly were refuted or contradicted the next day, but most of the time those were disregarded. One reporter of a Delhi-based paper one day sent a report "300 arrested, 300 injured". He seemed to be fond of the figure 300; in reality only three persons had received injuries in a clash in Srinagar. Many others also sent highly exaggerated reports. Most of them behaved in a partisan manner.

We are certain there was a hidden hand behind this well-planned campaign of disinformation. In a local 5-star hotel, Congress, the party claiming to be of the downtrodden, had set up a special Press room, fully equipped with good eats, drinks, etc. This Press room was run and provided by a Delhi-based businessman belonging to Jammu. The false and fictitious reports appearing in many newspapers were "prepared" there. Most of the pressmen preferred to attend the briefings in that hotel, than listen to Government senior officers like the Divisional Commissioner, the DIG Police or even the Chief Electoral Officer, who held daily briefings at a fixed time. It was obvious that they did not care to know the official version and therefore failed to carry a balanced report; it had to be one-sided, given by the Congress. One Jammu newspaper was particularly vicious and full of planted reports,

with the sole aim of painting Farooq Abdullah as the villain. In spite of all this I did not put any curbs on the Press, nor did my Government squeeze the Government advertisement flow to the erring newspapers. I was sure one day their own conscience will wake up and they would realise their mistakes. Most of them have lost credibility.

In Delhi I met editors of the news agencies and the leading national dailies, on the eve of polling, and invited them to come to Jammu and Kashmir, to witness the poll because I knew the Congress would shout from the housetops that elections were rigged when the results came out. But most of them had no time or inclination to personally take the trouble to come up hoping that their correspondents would report fairly. The Press Guild of India, had deputed some of its senior members to tour Kashmir and report back. After the investigation, they came to the conclusion that reporting by and large during the elections and immediately before it, was neither objective nor fair. The Press Council of India, independently after their own investigation, have reached the conclusion that the press reporting largely was one-sided and lacked clarity. Only the All India Newspaper Editors Conference said that the reporting was fair and correct. But a word about the composition of the AINEC delegation which came to visit Jammu and Kashmir. In it were office-bearers of different Congress Committees and it was led by its President, Shri Vishwa Bandhu Gupta, of the New Delhi Congress Committee. All through their tour of Jammu and Kashmir, they were conducted by the local Congressmen. For this, their report could not be expected to be objective or fair; the Congress was an interested party, it is interesting to note that soon after the Report was publicised, the AINEC President Shri Vishwa Bandhu Gupta was rewarded with a Rajya Sabha seat by Mrs. Gandhi. But the recent Report of the Press Council of India, about the Press coverage of the election scene in Jammu and Kashmir, has more than vindicated my stand that it was not fair and free. The Congress has also used a Bombay weekly, which is known for motivated writings, offered its pages in exchange for favours.

The less said about the official media, the better. The AIR Doordarshan have constantly been used as a campaign media for the Congress and against the Opposition. To the ruling

party they gave excessive coverage while to National Conference and other Opposition candidates, the minimal coverage was given. The State Government functioning was hardly mentioned while meetings of the Congress even inside a room, were splashed as if those were mammoth public meetings. There were instances when imaginative and exaggerated reports were given for publicity and were carried without verification. Even after the dismissal of my Government, PCC President, Mufti Syed who holds no official position, gets more coverage and it is used even on the national hook-up. Against this rarely were the activities of the National Conference mentioned. I have always complained to Mr. L.K. Advani (who was for three years I & B Minister in the Janta Government) about his failure to get the AIR and Doordarshan converted into autonomous corporations, on account of which the entire nation has to suffer. They are nothing more than the mouth-piece of the ruling party at the Centre. Our criticism of the AIR and Doordarshan was another point which led to the deterioration of our relationship.

The electronic media was misused also for furtherance of the conspiracy to dismiss my Government. Both the AIR and Doordarshan, were used to put out incorrect and sometimes false news. Everyone knows that AIR is the only means of informing people in the far-flung, border areas and they were thoroughly misinformed about the doings of my Government. The general impression that was carried and created by the AIR was that the Government was not functioning at all. Now in contrast, even the smallest act of the Shah Administration, is exaggerated and blown out of proportion to look respectable, if not impressive. This administration is being given credit for the things accomplished or started by the previous Governments. According to them all our projects were non-productive and we were indulging in wasteful expenditure. Thus they tried to poison the minds of people. Here is another instance how official media was used for Congress purpose. On 2 July, while I was still with the Governor in the Raj Bhawan, where I stayed till after 8.15 a.m. and no final picture about the alleged defections had emerged, surprisingly the AIR in its 8 a.m. news bulletin from Delhi, had announced that "Farooq Abdullah's Government had lost majority support since 12

MLAs have withdrawn support". Clearly AIR was used by the Congress for propaganda against me and the National Conference. AIR was kept informed about the steps to be taken as part of the conspiracy, so that those were promptly carried in the next news bulletin. Thus in the conspiracy to topple, the AIR was directly involved. That particular day this item was repeated in almost every news bulletin, so that it got drilled into the heads of every listener. They also intended it to frighten others to walk over to Shah's Camp. Mr. Ghulam Nabi Azad had been brought into the I & B Ministry with the purpose of having him give direct instructions to the other officers of the two official media, to black out Farooq Abdullah and the National Conference, and play up the Congress and the Shah faction. When I completed one year of my Government in June 1984, I was allowed to speak on the AIR and Doordarshan. I was given a certain code of conduct. I was told, in my address, whose text had to be submitted in advance, there should be no mention of politics or criticism of any other party or politician. The leader of the Congress Opposition, Moulvi Iftikhar Hussain Ansari, however, was allowed to use this very forum, to criticise my broadcast and to attack me and my party without any restriction; obviously the code of conduct had been relaxed for him.

As I have said earlier, the Congress decided to pick up my brother-in-law, Ghulam Mohammed Shah, my sister, Khalida (Begum Shah) and my younger brother, Tariq, to be used against me and as a front, to attack me, from within the family. Mr. Shah was easily won over, when they assured him chief ministership. Khalida was pacified with the Presidentship of a political party. Tariq was made to issue a number of statements to criticise and denigrate me, and these were played up, giving Tariq the impression that he had been made an all India figure and a counterweight for me. Delhi was gleeful that they had divided the formidable Sheikh family and thus successfully demolished this citadel. While this was on, the Shahs were persuaded to tour the countryside, and canvas support. On 25 April 1984 they decided to go to my assembly constituency of Ganderbal. I was at Kishtwar on a tour. When the Shahs reached Beehama, near Ganderbal, their political opponents raised slogans and expressed their resentment of having turned

against the National Conference. There may have been a minor clash between the two groups. It was alleged by them and even by the Congress that I had arranged to get rid of Mr. Shah. I did not have to eliminate my political opponents, because the elections would do that. I cannot be held responsible for whatever may happen anywhere in the State. I was touring Kishtwar, where even normal communication is not possible. What happened at Beehama, was reported to me by the police. I was told it was a spontaneous upsurge of people against Mr. Shah and his style of politics. I did not have any advance information of their plans to tour Ganderbal area.

Would my fall have come about even if members of my own family had not gone against me? I feel I would have been removed from power, anyhow, by Mrs. Gandhi, because she was hell-bent on it and would have found some excuse for it. If these three persons had not become available for this purpose the Congress would have found some other persons to create a situation of law and order and then would have dismissed the Government on the pretext that it was unable to handle the situation. This was their original plan and was tried soon after the election results had been declared. They had to remove my Government before ordering General Elections in the country. They miscalculated; Farooq Abdullah, in or out of power, would be able to swing a sizable vote. They never thought that people within the State would support me so much, or that outside my state I would have so many sympathisers who would give me the political status which would not have been possible to attain for a few more years. They also did not believe that the entire National Opposition would stand solidly behind me. On the other hand, they had hoped and banked on the entire nation calling for my head, since they had branded me as anti-National and secessionist. This was a rude shock to them. So much so that the Union Home Minister, had to tell the Lok Sabha that "Farooq Abdullah is not anti-National but he was soft to pro-Pakistani and pro-Khalistani elements." I was never soft, but I was against unwarranted action and repression; action required by law and the obtaining situation, was taken.

Many questions have been asked of the role played by my mother, in relations between Srinagar and Delhi. As Begum

Sheikh Abdullah and her own standing in Kashmir politics (she is also the patron of the National Conference), her presence on the political scence, is a major stabilising factor. She and Mrs. Gandhi, did not have a real meeting since Sheikh Sahib's passing away in September 1982, except on short meeting in New Delhi when she and I called on Mrs. Gandhi in January 1983, on return from Saudi Arabia, after performing Ummra. It was a very friendly and cordial meeting which lasted approximately an hour. Both of them had a free and frank talk and we had hoped that this meeting would clear most of the doubts and misunderstandings between us but some persons around Mrs. Gandhi did not allow her to exercise her mind independently. We are unable to appreciate or comprehend, their point of view. I would like to clarify one misconception which is widely believed that everytime I have got closer to Mrs. Gandhi, my mother has pulled me back. In fact, she has been keen that I mend my fences with her. She is a remarkable person who as a mother, had to go through the psychological strain, forced upon her by her own daughter and son-in-law.

The entire country was stunned with the Army action in the Golden Temple complex, events hour by hour, were followed keenly by everyone. So on 7 June when the AIR announced that dead body of Bhindranwale had been found from within the Akal Takht the reaction of a section of public should have been expected. It would have helped all State administrations if the Central Government had given this information to them before making it public. That would have given the States valuable time to make arrangements for maintaining law and order. This was not done. In Jammu and Srinagar, a section of Sikhs reacted sharply and strongly. Soon when this information was given to me, I called the Chief Secretary and the Director General of Police and we decided on the measures to be taken. They planned to impose prohibitory orders to control the situation, for crowds had already come out on the streets. Soon we saw smoke rising in the southwestern sky. The wireless report told us that Arya Samaj Girls School in Wazir Bagh, had been set on fire by hooligans. I sent the Police Chief to control the situation and deploy strong contingents in the affected areas. Then I left for the Raj Bhavan, to inform the

Governor of the situation and the measures which should be taken. It is not correct that the Governor had summoned me and told me that unless my Government cracked down on the miscreants immediately, he would take over the administration. He certainly had telephoned me to tell me that he had just then learnt that Bhindranwale had been killed. I told him that it was strange that I was being informed after the public announcement had been made. At the Raj Bhavan when I informed Mr. Jagmohan of the steps already taken he was satisfied and happy that prompt action had been initiated. Therefore, the question of his taking over the Administration did not arise.

The well-known Hindu festival, Durga Ashtami, was also on 7 June. This is celebrated at the temple of Khirbhawani in Tullamula, about 20 miles from Srinagar. I was told that thousands of Kashmiri Pandits (brahmins) had gathered there. As Head of the Government, I had to go there. Earlier in the day I had been to all the disturbed areas of Srinagar, including the Arya Samaj Girls School, the Nirankari Bhavan in Gogji Bagh. I had also visited the Hanuman Mandir in Amirakadal. Another purpose of going to Khirbhawani was to put an end to all kinds of rumours that had spread there, and to reassure the Kashmiri Pandits who feared trouble on their return home in the evening. I assured them personally that full protection would be given to them on the journey back to Srinagar, there would be protection force deployed in all the residential areas. There has been criticism that "while Srinagar was burning I had gone to Khirbhawani to participate in a Festival." All kinds of stories were circulated, and some were carried by newspapers, that Farooq Abdullah had deliberately not accorded protection to Hindus in Srinagar because he is in league with the Sikh extremists. I, therefore, wanted to put the record straight.

Mrs. Gandhi, and the entire Congress leadership, has never forgiven me for siding with the National Opposition. Many people have asked me why I decided to throw my lot with the Opposition, rather than with the Congress, because it is widely felt that this was the main reason of my dismissal. Let me take you back to May 1983, when we were going through electioneering in Jammu and Kashmir, for elections to the Legislative Assembly. We found the Congress was hostile and the Election Commission, was partial towards the Congress. Even

the observers who were deputed by the Election Commission, to oversee the electioneering and the polling, were hobnobbing with Congress leaders and the Union Ministers, who had come here to conduct the Congress campaign. The observers, who were lodged in the State Guest House, used to be brought to the Hotel Broadway, mostly under cover of darkness, where Congress had set up its election campaign headquarters. Closed door meetings used to take place between the observers and the Congress leaders. My information is that directions used to be given to the observers by the Congress leaders. About the same time, Mr. N. T. Rama Rao, the Chief Minister of Andhra Pradesh, had called a meeting of the Leaders of the various Opposition parties, at Vijaywada. I felt that I should apprise all these leaders about the way elections were being conducted here and the problems that were being created for me. Many members of the Executive of my party were against my leaving the State at this very critical time, for the polling was only a week away, and senior leaders of the Congress including Mrs. Gandhi, were extensively touring different constituencies. I told them that I felt it was more important that the National Opposition was told of what was happening in Jammu and Kashmir then. I felt that if I did not convey this to them I would be doing disservice to my motherland for it was certain that similar experiments would be undertaken in other states if it succeeded here. I flew to Vijaywada and stayed there only a few hours in which I told them of the happenings in my state. I told them that these should be warning to them, for they may be the next ones to be dealt with like this. At Vijaywada, I met the entire National Opposition including the Chief Minister of Tamil Nadu, Mr. M. G. Ramachandran. I am glad that they debated the issue and at the end issued a long and strong statement on it. This annoyed the Congress very much, obviously because Farooq Abdullah, was no longer, alone in the big country, India.

Before they dispersed at Vijaywada, it was decided to meet periodically. There was no suggestion that such conclaves should become anti-Indira forums. The next conclave was to consider the Punjab tangle. The Akalis wanted it to be held in Amritsar but all others felt that it should be held outside Punjab to enable all participants to express themselves freely. This was

then held in Delhi and Mr. H.N. Bahuguna offered to organise it. This conclave held, in July 1983, discussed Punjab in which the entire nation was interested. Ways and means of bringing Hindus and Sikhs closer, were discussed. The question before us was one of survival of the nation not any particular region or community. There were differences in the perception of the BJP and the Lok Dal. They declined to participate in the conclave because according to them Shri Bahuguna had invited parties, without consulting them. Ultimately, Mr. Rama Rao was able to persuade the Lok Dal to join, but the BJP did not join because both Mr. Vajpayee and Mr. Advani were out of Delhi. It was decided to sent joint delegations to the Punjab to study the situation and devise ways of bringing peace and amity to the State. Mrs. Gandhi and the Central Government believed that the Opposition Conclaves were formulating plans to overthrow her Government, while not even once had the topic come up for discussion. This was most unfortunate, because if the Congress had cooperated with the Opposition parties I am sure the Punjab situation would not have deteriorated thus far. The third conclave was held in Srinagar in October, 1983. This was in response to the invitation I had extended to them in May in Vijaywada. The only subject which was to be discussed in Srinagar was, Center-State relations, which by now had assumed great importance. No other subject was taken up, which can be substantiated from independent sources. A book has been compiled and published which gives views of the various leaders and the Opposition parties, on a number of issues involved in the entire gamut of the Centre-State relations. It also includes the Resolutions adopted at the conclave. This clearly shows that the constitutional changes that were suggested could be brought about only by the Parliament, after discussion. So where was the conspiracy that was hatched at the Srinagar Conclave held at my invitation? Why did Mrs. Gandhi feel it was directed against her and the Congress? It is really surprising that they feel they alone have a right to speak about India and its future, and that all others especially belonging to the Opposition, have no right to think for themselves and for building a better India. Somehow, they believe that the Opposition is a willing tool of foreign interests, to destroy India. The truth seems to be that the only

way to save India from further destruction is for the Opposition and the ruling party to understand each other and jointly hammer out solutions of various problems facing the country. The Fourth Conclave was held in Calcutta in January 1984. The most important subject for discussion was the accelerated attempts of the Congress Party to topple the non-Congress Governments in Jammu and Kashmir, Tripura, Andhra Pradesh, West Bengal and Karnataka.

If I had not taken part in the Opposition conclaves, then an important part of Indian Union, Jammu and Kashmir, would have been absent, and our people would not have become part of the national mainstream, so quickly. Kashmir would have continued to live in the political cocoon and its blessed isolation. This being my contribution, the Congress still dubs me anti-Indian. I am proud that we have joined the national mainstream and this has resulted in bringing India as a whole, closer to us than ever before. Today even in South India, they talk of Kashmir and happenings here, while earlier, they did not seem to have any emotional attachment with Kashmir. The same kind of voices seem to come from the east and the west. This shows that the conclaves have had a positively good effect, and Kashmir no longer lives in isolation. If we had not participated in the conclaves last year we would not have received the support from the National Opposition on my dismissal, because then, not knowing me personally, they might have been taken in by the the Congress propaganda. Luckily the Opposition had been fully informed about the machinations of the Congress to destabilise my Government, otherwise not a single voice would have been raised in the support of the people in Jammu and Kashmir. The entire nation would have believed that Farooq Abdullah surely is anti-National, communal, secessionist, pro-Pakistani, and in league with the Sikh extremists. These conclaves have been of greatest benefit to all in this State, whatever Mr. Shah may say. In future, being part of the mainstream, our people will get massive support from over 700 million people of India and have their support in our struggle for restoration of democracy in Jammu and Kashmir. The next conclave is scheduled to be held in Madras on the invitation of DMK. There we will be able to inform them of the toppling of my Government and subsequent events.

We hope to discuss how can we restore democratic working all over India.

The getting together of the National Opposition and forging a united front, it is not absolutely necessary to have one party under one leader. Perhaps, a broad understanding on a minimum common programme and seat adjustments for elections would be most acceptable. Whatever be the emerging scene, regional parties will continue to be relevant and important. The DMK and the Telugu Desam, for instance, will have a major say in the Parliament. All the major regional parties combined, will be able to influence the national parties in arriving at decisions on national issues. This will be better for the whole country, for I feel the regional parties will play the role of a catalyst to bring diverse forces and elements together.

While I am talking of the conclaves, it would be of interest to tell you of the murderous attack made on me in Calcutta when I was leaving for Delhi after the Opposition conclave. I am sure that the attack on me made by Congress workers, was definitely to eliminate me physically and lay the blame at the door of the Left Front Government in West Bengal for their failure to protect my life. This was my first experience of this kind. I believe that in a democracy everyone has a right to oppose not only for sake of opposition but because one holds different views. I was not enemy of the nation and yet they wanted to kill me. In Calcutta I decided to cut short my visit and return to Kashmir because of the incidents Congress workers had engineered at Bijbehara and other places in Kashmir Valley. I believe that Mr. Arun Nehru had telephoned Mr. Priyaranjan Das Munshi in Calcutta to stage the demonstration against me. He hired a crowd, I was told. The early morning that I motored to the Airport at Dum Dum, it was very foggy and I could not see even the driver on the motor-bike in front of the car. It was about 4.30 a.m. when we entered the airport area, suddenly, as out of nothingness a large and angry crowd materialised and surrounded the car. I had opened the car window to see who these people were. Just then someone out of the crowd grabbed me and tried to pull me out. Some others struck the car with long metaltipped sticks. Fortunately, the driver did not lose his nerve and he drove through

the slogan-shouting crowd who waved their arms menacingly. That is how I survived. The airport security was on the scene soon. But what is strange is how did such a large crowd gather without anyone's knowledge at such an early hour. Because of the fog the airport was closed and the flight was delayed. When we reached Delhi, we realized that there too a large hired crowd waited for us. This had melted away, for waiting, they would not have got overtime wages. But when I arrived at Kashmir House on Prithviraj Road, I found a large crowd outside its entrance. I could spot a Congress MP, Mr. Jagdish Tytler, leading them. I was told that earlier Mr. Arun Nehru, another Congress MP, was organising them. After a while I went out to attend the funeral of somebody I knew. When I returned the crowd had become larger. They had thrown stones and damaged State property, the neon-signs and the windowpanes of the main building had been broken. These were hired hooligans led by Congress MPs. I was advised to go inside through the back door which I refused saying, "If they have to get rid of me, let them, but I will not run away from them because I am not doing anything against the nation. It is they who are destroying the nation, not I." Therefore, I was able to face them without fear. We made a report to the police about this attack. In Calcutta already the Government had taken action. In Delhi the case was registered but I do not think any action has been taken since. Nothing is likely to be done so long as this Government is in power, but all the same we wanted to register a complaint to the Police. There is no doubt that it was a plot to assassinate me and then impose Governor's rule in Jammu and Kashmir.

Many Congress spokesmen have talked of my foreign connections in this regard. A day after my dismissal a story was planted in a Delhi-based newspaper, that I had invited an American diplomat to Kashmir during the previous month. The insinuation being that I was being "advised and influenced" by them in my policies and actions. I have never invited foreign politicians or diplomats to visit Jammu and Kashmir State or had discussions with them on political matters. No foreigner has interfered with the policies I have pursued. This charge is absurd. This is a tourist State and many foreign diplomats do visit it. Some pay a courtesy call on me as the

Chief Minister, which is a normal practice. The only foreigner I have invited to Kashmir was Mr Edward Heath, the former Prime Minister of United Kingdom, for whom I have regard as an honest and upright politician.

The Congress and its allies—the Shah faction in Kashmir—have not given up their description of me as anti-national and dangerous to the security of India. Mr. Shah has also alleged that I had betrayed the Kashmiris, though he is the one who has really betrayed them. If by taking Kashmiris into the national mainstream, I have betrayed Kashmiris then I am sorry to say that he does not know the meaning of betrayal and he, in fact, is anti-national. I also do not accept his charge that after dismissal I am inciting people to lawlessness and violence and communal hatred and destruction of public property. If I was intent on creating trouble then I would not have frequently appealed for communal amity, peaceful and non-violent movement for restoration of democracy in the State. If I had wanted, then Mr. Shah would not have known what has hit his Ministry. On the contrary I have all along, wanted peace to prevail here because we know that our stand is based on truth. The goal of restoration of democracy cannot be achieved through violence; then it would be self-defeating. Violence on the streets will help only Mr. Shah in further crushing my people. Let it be known that I am absolutely against violence and lawlessness and believe it should never made part of political game.

It is surprising that two dimetrically opposed reasons have been advanced by my detractors, for my dismissal. On one hand it is alleged that I had to be removed in national interest, because according to them, I had links with secessionists, and on the other hand it is claimed that I had to go because I had lost support of the majority in the Legislative Assembly. Both premises are incorrect, even baseless. If I had lost the support of the majority then it should have been tested and demonstrated in the House, not in the Raj Bhavan where I was told that I had lost the majority and no opportunity was given to me to prove that I still enjoyed the support of the majority. Was it fair to instal somebody in my place and then give him one month to buy support? Because Mr. Shah was given one month during which period they were able to intimidate, tempt

and ensnare some individuals with lucrative positions, and use official machinery to destroy the sanctity of the House, to herd the defectors together. I do not accept the present Government as legal. Branding me a secessionist was only a ruse to inflame the minds of the majority community in the rest of country to justify action against me and secure public for it. They wanted me to be branded as anti-national, a Pakistani or a Khalistani. They do not understand that this would harm not Farooq Abdullah but sow seeds of distrust in the minds of 13 crore Moslems who are Indians as good as anyone else. I am sorry that Delhi took such a course.

India is a large family with 22 states and some Union Territories and Kashmir is just one State amongst them. Somehow, large number of Kashmiris feel that they do not get the treatment they should as members of the Indian family. But I have never talked of independent Kashmir. Let me make it clear that unconstitutional dismissal of my Government is hurting the people of Kashmir and unless this is righted India will be going on the path which will be detrimental for the entire country. We think that the only way to apply the healing touch here is to appoint a new Governor. A person like Mr. L.K. Jha or Mr. B K. Nehru, in whom people have faith, should be made Governor. This should be followed by dismissal of the present Government and fresh elections which are freely and fairly conducted should be held. This would cement the good ties and friendship. I do not see any other way of assuaging the injured feelings of the people here. Restoration of democracy in Jammu and Kashmir is not the responsibility of the National Conference alone. Therefore, I welcome cooperation and assistance of political parties within the State and from outside.

How democratic is the present Government? It is well known that a large number of our party workers have been arrested and jailed. Many have been tortured to induce them to join the Shah faction. I was advised to approach the Amnesty International and other international organisations. I refused to do that for I am against tarnishing India's image abroad. I hate to air my domestic grievances unless there is a situation like the Emergency of 1975-77. It will be totally unpatriotic to rush abroad when there are so many organisations in our

own country, like the People's Union for Civil Liberties and the People's Union for Democratic Rights. Many eminent legal luminaries have offered to take up our cases free of charge. In spite of repression and arrests, no more than three MLAs went over to Shah's faction, when the special session of the Legislative Assembly was convened on 31 July.

The major parts of Srinagar were under curfew and strict security was imposed all round the area housing the Legislative Assembly. Those MLAs who were allowed to come to the Assembly had taken their seats almost an hour before the session was to start. This was for the first time in legislative history that trained commandos were stationed inside the House. They had been thoroughly trained for action inside. On the day of the session, an all-party delegation of the National Conference, the Panthers Party and the Peoples Conference, went to meet the Governor at 8 a.m. to ensure security for the MLAs. He assured them that orders would be given immediately to give protection to them so that they could attend the session. As soon as the delegation came back from the Raj Bhavan, a telephonic message was received from the President of the Peoples Conference, Mr. Abdul Ghani Lone that he was not allowed to cross the Rambagh Bridge, and proceed to the Assembly. Instead he was asked by the Police to accompany them to jail. This information was given to the Governor on the telephone. He promised to look into it. Then we left for the Assembly Chamber. The President of the Panthers Party, Mr. Bhim Singh, was in my vehicle. When we reached the Assembly gate, the vehicle was stopped and a couple of policemen pulled Bhim Singh out, as if he was an animal. We asked to see the warrant of arrest but none was shown because none had been issued. I was angry and asked the policeman to announce that no Opposition MLA would be allowed to enter the Assembly Chamber, and only then would we go back. The police officer standing nearby said he was sorry but he had to carry out orders from above. One MLA was arrested at home and the other was pulled out of my vehicle. This shows how partisan the Governor was throughout. Once we got into the House and the Speaker arrived to start the session, there was pandemonium in the House. The treasury benches were not prepared to listen to anything. As soon as the Speaker

announced that the 12 defecting members had lost the right to vote and hence Mr. Shah not having a majority had failed to win the vote of confidence, and that this was being conveyed to the Governor members from the the treasury benches and commandos from the public galleries ran to the dias, and started manhandling the Speaker and our MLAs. Since the House had been adjourned by the Speaker after his announcement of the loss of vote of confidence, we all left the House. Such a thing had never been witnessed anywhere in the world that the Speaker is bodily thrown out of his seat and somebody else walks up and occupies it without any proper election. We do not recognise the new Speaker nor the Government. Both are illegal and illegitimate and have been put in office with the active connivance of the Central Government, the Governor's assistance at all levels and on strength of large-scale deployment of central forces. They have challenged my legal, constitutional, political and moral right to rule after winning elections. The supremacy lies with the people and it is for them to decide how to restore democracy and the sovereignty of the people.

On 1 October the Shah Commission got the Governor to convene a meeting of the Legislative Council.. This is illegal and unconstitutional. It was called to prove that Mr. Shah had majority support in the Council. Why was the curfew imposed in Srinagar? Why was the Deputy Chairman of the Council not allowed to enter the House? It was absolutely illegal to keep the Presiding Officer away from the the House (the Chairman's Office was vacant for the past two years). The police was deployed all over. Generally, passes for public galleries were not issued and few selected ones that had to be issued, were handed out by the police not by the Council Secretariat. This is very strange because Mr. Shah professes to protect democracy. I have been told that it is unconstitutional to summon only the Upper House, without convening the Lower House.

As I said earlier, efforts had started soon after I formed my Government in June 1983, to wean away some MLAs. So the operation topple started a year earlier but efforts were stepped up after April last. The green signal was received from New Delhi that some sort of manoeuvre should be started to get as many MLAs at the earliest, whatever the price. Strict instructions were given that only that number of MLAs may be got as is.

absolutely necessary, to form a Government with the support of 26 Congress MLAs. Some of the MLAs who have gone over were Ministers in the Sheikh Government earlier and had tasted power. And this was the biggest bait for them. Dilawar Mir (now Agriculture Minister) used to pester me off and on to take him in the Ministry. I got him made Deputy Speaker of the Legislative Assembly but he continued to be dissatisfied and disgruntled. Then there was Hissamdin Bandey (now Food, Supplies and Transport Minister) who wanted a ministerial berth. Another one was Ghulam Mohammed Bhaderwah (now Minister for Housing and Urban Development) who was not satisfied with being made the Senior Vice-President of our party. Others who have defected were also after me to accommodate them in the Ministry or provide them with lucrative posts in Commissions or Corporations. But I was most shocked by the defections of Smt. Khemlata Wakhloo (a nominated MLA), Sardar Rafiq Hussain Khan and Jagjiwan Lal, who were both Ministers of State in my Government and had been given independent charge of important portfolios, with a lot of patronage. Most of the defectors were close either to Mr. Shah or to the Congress, and a little pressure on them yielded the desired result. Offers of ministerial berths and other attractions made them cross over to the other side. Some may join the Congress if they realise that the Shah Government is on its last legs. Whatever the Congress might say, there is no doubt that it was Congress money and active support which was the vital factor in my overthrow. The Congress is directly responsible for my dismissal and the situation which prevails in Jammu and Kashmir today. A wild allegation has been made that I had threatened defectors or would-be-defectors with death, violence, loot and arson. In betraying the trust of people there was anger and bitterness against the defectors and sometimes they had to face angry demonstrations. At no time have I or my party said or done anything which would be incitement for people to take revenge for their defection. They certainly will be called upon by the people to answer for their actions. This may be at the next elections or even earlier. The electorate will decide whether the defectors lived up to the expectations of the people who had expressed confidence in them by voting them into the Assembly at my request.

It was reported in the press that at the meeting of the Cabinet held three days before my removal, the question of advising the Governor to dissolve the assembly, was discussed but over-confidence made me drop the idea. I would like to make it clear that this Cabinet meeting had nothing to do with this particular problem. Matters pertaining to forthcoming Id-ul-Fitr, municipalities and transport tariff came up for discussion. Memos of this meeting are still in the Civil Secretariat and this can be verified. It never crossed my mind to advise the Governor to dissolve the Assembly and hold new elections. To give this advice would have been totally wrong at that time. Elections have to come sooner or later and it was better for us to know who were the blacksheep among our own fold. If the House had been dissolved, we would not have been able to expose those individuals who were enemies within, and would have been saddled with them again. Now they are thoroughly exposed and the people know where they stand.

Many people have compared the public reaction to my dismissal, with that of my father's removal in 1953. According to them not many tears were shed at my dismissal. Although the comparison would be unfair, I shall deal more with the reaction, news of which, perhaps, was not allowed to go out. History of our State has been that Congress has always used their money to buy people to spread anti-national slogans which have always harmed us when it comes to domestic struggle within the nation. Second, the para-military forces that were brought into Kashmir for putting down any situation that might arise subsequent to my dismissal, were of very special types like the UP Provincial Armed Constabulary, known for its communal tendencies, the Special Armed Force from MP, which is the highly trained anti-dacoity force, besides reinforcements of the BSF and CRP. We all know that these troops have been taught only to shoot, not to talk. A senior commander of one of these forces once told me some months ago that troops have been told that Moslems and Sikhs cannot be trusted—both are anti-national by and large. Under these circumstances, I felt, that getting my people shot dead was not going to help in restoration of democracy. For this reason primarily, I decided that public sentiment here has to be restrained and kept within limits to save human lives. I did not want precious blood

spilt here by police firing. Besides killing of innocent people would have been exploited by anti-Indian elements. This would have given a handle to my political opponents to proclaim to the world that I was a leader of an anti-India movement. They would hold this up as proof of their earlier allegation against me that I was in league with anti-national and secessionists forces. I did not want to fall in trap of Shan-Mufti combine. I was sure then that democratic elements all over the country would one day rise and I wanted my own people to be alive to see that glorious day. I wanted them to see the day when democracy was back on its rails in India. For this purpose I gave directions to the rank and file of my Party. I personally went to every part of the Valley telling the people not express anger violently. I told them that our struggle would be non-violent. We decided not to confront the police or paramilitary forces at any time because they would just shoot. This is the main reason that Kashmir did not see so many violent demonstrations on my dismissal. It was not on account of the massive police force deployed by the Shah Administration, as claimed by Mr. Shah. Instances have come to my notice that his men had hired goondas who went round in Government jeeps, through the city and spread rumours as also hatred. Soon after the special session of the Legislative Assembly on 31 July, when unconstitutionally, he claimed to have obtained a "vote of confidence", batches of goondas went round the city in government jeeps, throwing crackers on houses. This infuriated a large number of people, but they were persuaded not to retaliate. It was asked that while the entire city was under curfew how did these hooligans get the permission to move about and burn thousands of rupees worth crackers, resulting in the subsequent upheaval. According to information available about 35 persons lost their lives in police firing on different occasions and hundreds were injured. Over a thousand were arrested and many tortured inhumanly. The two parties sharing power at present, the Congress and the Shah faction are working for destruction of peace. We will continue our peaceful and non-violent struggle for the restoration of democracy.

Six weeks after my dismissal, we witnessed the dismissal of the Chief Minister of Andhra Pradesh, Mr. N.T. Rama Rao. This proved to the hilt that the Kashmir episode was a link in

the chain, of the Centre's plan to destabilise all non-Congress State Governments before calling for the General Elections, so that in those States also they could have administrations which were favourable to the Congress or were its electoral allies. The action in Hyderabad, also proved that charges levelled against me—that I was anti-national—were baseless, for then why was NTR removed? These charges were to serve only as a cover for Delhi's nefarious design. From perusal of the national newspapers one gets to know the tremendous upsurge not only in Andhra Pradesh but all over the country, on his dismissal. This resulted in pressure that got built up all round, and Mrs. Gandhi had to advise the Governor, Mr. Ram Lal to resign from his office; he could not function from there anymore. Besides somebody had to be made the scapegoat and the blame was heaped on him. This, however, had been predicted by the Opposition leaders at the protest rally held in Hyderabad after NTR's dismissal. The tide was against the Congress, all over the country. Various arguments have been put forward by them to cover their unconstitutional acts in Pondicherry, Sikkim, Kashmir and then in Andhra Pradesh. People all over are anxious for the re-establishment of democracy. I am glad that Mrs. Gandhi dismissed NTR because of that action, people all over have taken seriously what we have been saying all along about the intentions of the Centre against non-Congress ruled states. Congress culture at present will not allow democracy to flower; it wants to have and perpetuate autocratic authoritarian rule in the country. I was happy that NTR accepted my suggestion of taking all his MLAs to New Delhi to be presented to the President. Whether the President counted them or not is not important but it demonstrated to the whole country, that even when NTR had the majority of the MLAs on his side, the Governor dismissed him on the plea that he had lost the majority support. The Congress party is keen to install puppet Chief Ministers in the non-Congress-ruled States, and then give them enough time to buy MLAs just as was done here, when Mr. Shah was given one month to "win" over some of my MLAs. I am glad this has further brought the Opposition parties nearer to each other.

My dismissal had provided a common platform to all the Opposition parties, and if this unity gets consolidated I will consider my "sacrifice" was well worth it. For a long time I have

felt that the National Opposition is in disarray. Unless it closes its ranks, forges understanding and thinks in unison, the prospects of seeing a strong and real democracy in India will not be realised. Many Opposition parties have different perceptions about the Punjab problem but on Kashmir and Andhra Pradesh they seem to be united. This awareness among the Opposition parties has enabled Kashmir to get into the national mainstream. For a long time Kashmir has been isolated; we in Kashmir for all these years have only been familiar with the Congress party. The Opposition parties and their leaders had kept away from Kashmir. When most of them came for the Opposition conclave in October 1983, their views about Kashmir and its people underwent a sea-change and resulted in better integration with the rest of India. I hope that this will continue to grow and that seen we will have a real emotional integration in every sense. But in this, too the Shah faction is setting up obstacles.

The Shah Government, as far as the majority of people are concerned in Jammu and Kasimir, is illegal, illegitimate and unconstitutional. Some call it "Defectors' Government" while others have christened it "Curfew Raj". It is anti-democratic and a fraud on the people. This is a marriage of convenience between the Congress and the immoral defectors. They were elected on the National Conference ticket and under the anti-defection law of our State, they are automatically thrown out of the House. They do not accept this premise on the plea that it is not change of party but only a question of change of the Leader of the Legislature Party. I am waiting to hear their arguments now that even the Election Commission of India, has refused to accept the Shah faction and as the "real National Conference" and instead has declared that the party headed by me is the real and the only National Conference, which has been recognised as a State party and will continue to use the election symbol of a "plough". The Shah faction has been asked to take on another name, different from "National Conference". This has raised serious complications for the defectors and their benefactors. It is strange that the Congress which till the other day claimed, that all the National Conference MLAs were elected through large-scale rigging, now considers the

defectors truly and properly elected representatives of the people. All the 46 MLAs belonging to the National Conference have election petitions filed against them by the Congress to support the defectors, or the elections were properly conducted and rigging allegation was mere political propaganda. The Shah Ministry cannot last because it has no mass support and no other MLA has joined them after the three who were "trapped" before the special session of the Legislative Assembly on 31 July.

Against this, an argument trotted out by Mr. Shah and the Congress party, is that Farooq Abdullah was imposed on the people against their will. It seems they are ignorant of the facts of history. If it were so, I could not have won the elections against the might of Mrs. Gandhi, the Central Government and the Congress party's juggernaut organisational machine. I won the elections on my own steam without even the benign presence of my father, the Sher-i-Kashmir. To refresh their memory, I should remind them that it was on a Friday afternoon in the Hazratbal Shrine, under the shadow of the sacred relic of the Holy Prophet (peace be on His soul) that Sheikh Sahib asked thousands who had gathered there, as to who his successor should be. I was sitting beside him and the crowd with one voice said "Farooq Farooq". Thus my election as President of the National Conference was based on the wishes of the people. A session of the delegates of the party was held later where Mr. G.M. Shah himself formally proposed me for the Presidentship of the National Conference. Imagine, today the same man has the audacity to say that I was imposed on the people. Because of the above facts, I have absolute moral, legal, political and constitutional right to rule, as head of the Administration in Jammu and Kashmir. The "Defectors'" Government has issued two long statements after a lot of deliberation and hardwork, trying to convince people about the constitutionality of my dismissal. The national press has called them as "unconvincing" and as a "deliberate attempt to smear Mr. Abdullah with political abuse"

An oft-repeated allegation is that during my regime there was a large-scale misuse of funds and there was massive diversion of funds towards unproductive expenditure. As everyone knows no funds can be drawn from the consolidated funds unless the budget has been approved by the Legislature. The Planning

Commission periodically approves various projects after a thorough scrutiny. Last year both the Planning Commission and the Eighth Finance Commission gave us a very good chit, after detailed study. The Planning Commission gave us additional funds to raise our annual outlay to 247 crores. Only two points were considered objectionable. One was about low electricity tariff and the other was the urgent need to reduce pilferage of electricity. Another issue brought up for discussion was about losses incurred by the State Road Transport Corporation. The Finance Commission was satisfied with the additional resources we had been able to raise and due to our past performance it recommended 114 crores of additional grant to Jammu and Kashmir. Ours was one of the few States who had increased its internal resources more than expected by the Planning Commission. Mrs. Gandhi was fond of the 20-Point Programme. She criticised us for not paying enough attention to it. She even said that in the list of performances, Jammu and Kashmir was 18th, out of 22 states. At a meeting of the Chief Ministers with her last year where the Programme was discussed in detail, I informed the meeting that my Government had already subscribed 50 per cent funds for various projects under this programme, that was expected of us. That is why we got the matching grant from the Centre. Our working season being different from the rest of the country, our performance during a particular period could not come up to the level achieved by other states. It is also incorrect to say that any funds allocation for specific schemes under this Programme were ever diverted. Such charges were levelled only to malign me and my Government. There were no unproductive projects because all projects had been cleared with Central authorities and had been approved by the Planning Commission. Are they alleging that their own Planning Commission had gone wrong?

Aren't Ministers Human?

In the scenario that was being built up for my dismissal, was the charge that I was not able to devote enough time to administration and that I was on tour most of the time, inside and outside the State. It was wrong to say that file work used to pile up in my absence, decisions on urgent and vital matters were inordinately delayed, or that I had delegated extensive powers to bureaucrats. I believe a Chief Minister has not only to sit in the chair in the Secretariat dishing out orders. He should go to the grassroots and see how the Government policies and projects are being implemented. It is important for the Chief Minister to know at first hand how things are running, even in the farflung and border areas. Whether people put on a particular job, are really doing it. Whether teachers are in schools, and doctors and other paramedics on duty. Whether roads that are shown on paper, are there on the ground and canals for which funds were sanctioned ever materialised. I wanted to have contact with officers and their subordinates who were directly involved in development programmes for the upliftment of people. It was essential for me to know it personally. My visits to other States were important because of the propaganda my political opponents were unleashing. It was vital for me to tell people in those states what was happening in Jammu and Kashmir. I also wanted them to know first hand that I was neither anti-national nor secessionist. These visits paid handsome dividends. The allegations and charges against me being made by Congress leaders, had to be answered and truth made known. This was one of the ways I accomplished it. When I was dismissed there was sizable upsurge in many parts of the country and among other things I ascribe this to my visits to various States earlier which had enabled people there to know me. Another result of my visits to

other parts of the country, was inviting and influencing investors and industrialists to set up industries in this State. Because of these efforts, a total investment of over Rs 100 crores had been made in Jammu and Kashmir in the past two years. I was also Minister for Tourism and such visits helped to promote tourism to my State. The spurt in increased arrivals from these regions was the direct result of such visits. It is said that because of my frequent tours there was indiscipline among the Government servants. Another reason advanced for the administrative lapses was that because I was not serious in administrative matters, things were allowed to drift. Can anyone really believe it? My entire Council of Ministers and the Chief Secretary were there all the time and there was not a single instance of such a lapse that was brought to my notice. Files moved faster and cases were decided in less time than at present when the State has a Chief Minister, a Deputy Chief Minister and 18 cabinet ministers. None of them sits in his office because they have to have strict security. They cannot also tour the rural areas or visit development projects. There is a total collapse of administrative system. Things never came to such a pass during my tenure even when I did not have total cooperation from the Centre. We took major decisions and did not get lost in files and paper work. We saw to it that work never suffered.

Other silly charges are "Farooq Abdullah was not a serious-minded Chief Minister and he was moving about on a motor-bike." They called me a "Disco Chief Minister". To sit in a glass house was not for me. I wanted to be one who could go and see how a traffic constable was working, whether traffic is moving as it should. Are people in the streets getting articles and commodities at fixed rates? It was important for me to go to a vendor selling vegetables to find out if he was selling them at reasonable rates. By using motorbike I was able to go into narrow lanes and streets and stop wherever I wanted to. I could also dodge my securitymen like this and ensure that advance information of my arrival in an area was not announced. I used to suddenly get down to a ration depot and find only for myself if people were getting proper rations in quality and at the rates fixed by the Government. Does it mean that a Chief Minister should not have direct contact with people? I did not want to be such a Chief Minister. This also made me a people's

man who enjoyed their confidence. I hated the security ring around me and used to break away from them by riding a motorbike. If you are not a people's man, you will need security. The people protect you unless you are hated by them.

Because of my love for my people somebody propagated that I stood for a "Kashmir for Kashmiris only". India is a big country. A large family with 22 States and Kashmir is part of this family. People in Kashmir feel and will continue to feel that the same treatment is not meted out to them as to other States. Some other States feel the same way about the special status that we have. They feel we are better off and yet Farooq Abdullah has been talking of independent Kashmir and that Farooq is following Sheikh Abdullah in this regard. These assumptions are baseless. We in Kashmir feel that Central Government's action in dismissing a constitutionally established Government on 2 July, was most unconstitutional and irregular. This is hurting the people here and unless this is corrected soon, it would be detrimental for the whole nation. These wounds may not heal in spite of my efforts.

A little earlier, I talked of Sheikh Sahib. My political adversaries have started questioning even the authenticity of the Will of my father—his political testament—which was published soon after his death. There is no question about its veracity and authenticity. The thoughts expressed in it were the same which Sheikh Sahib had publicly stated in the last two years of his life. He had said on numerous occasions that the National Conference was a home-grown organisation with roots in every nook and corner of Kashmir and this should be strengthened because that alone was the guarantee of their rights and a bright future. He said this in every district of this State. There is a complete conformity of this theme with the thread running through the Will. I was never told about the Will by him. It was in the custody of my mother at the time of his demise. Another perfidious charge made is that the publication of his autobiography is being delayed on account of political considerations and because some harsh things have been said about me. I should clarify here that the publication of the book has been postponed because a number of people about whom Sheikh Sahib has written, are still alive. His opinion about them is sincere and honest and may be harsh at times. It was thought

that its publication may hurt them badly and may even have political repercussions. If it had been published during his own lifetime then he was there to answer the criticism or defend his views. We are presently getting it translated into English and Hindi. When this work is completed a decision will be taken about its publication simultaneously in both the languages.

My father taught me, advised me and equipped me to face the world boldly. But Mrs. Gandhi and Mr. Jagmohan have taught me more. My dismissal has been a blessing in disguise. It has taught me a lesson, which I would not have learnt otherwise, it has been like a shock therapy for me. It has matured me in months which otherwise would have taken years. It has become clear to me, who are with me and who are against me. This has also tested loyalties of the people. They have given me support and cooperation in ample measure. The way I was dismissed brought me sympathies of millions of peoples from both my own State and from all other parts of the country. This has brought me closer to them. I was able to speak all over the country without inhibitions, which I could not have done as Chief Minister. It would have taken me years to become so well known all over my country, which became possible only in few months.

I have learnt so many things from this traumatic experience. For instance, I have realised how important it is to choose a right candidate at the time of elections. I also now know how vital it is to keep bureaucracy out of and away from politics, at all times. They have to serve the people; they should not be time-servers. In my experience I found that some of the bureaucrats hobnobbed with political elements like the Congress and had direct relations with people in the Centre. They kept me totally in the dark. Bureaucracy for years has been politicised but it has to be cleansed at any cost. Another thing that I have learnt is that the police force should also be kept out of political manoeuvres. They must be used with caution and should not be made tools of party in power. My intelligence was extremely poor and this was the real defect. Probably, the information they were feeding me all the time, was not correct and may have been even doctored. This setup should be such that they should be able to tell the real facts even if these are unpalatable or bitter. Perhaps the information that was being passed on to me, was

filtered so that I am kept in the dark and unaware of the real situation. I have also realised how important, nay vital, it is that there should be no misgivings and no misunderstandings between the Centre and the State. If ever such a thing creeps in, the Governor should become a bridge. In our State the bridge snapped with the departure of Mr. B.K. Nehru. He was the one who had advised me to "look into your own bureaucracy". Now I have realised the real import of his advice. There are many in the Opposition who feel that Governor's office should be abolished but I consider it an important link in the federal structure of our country. As long as the Governor functions within the constitutional limits and he is not chosen on political considerations, there should not be any problem. I think Governor for a State should be selected by an all-parties Parliamentary Committee or alternatively the Central Government should send a panel of names to the Chief Minister of the State concerned and he should make the final choice. Jammu and Kashmir has had the good fortune of having eminent persons like Shri Bhagwan Sahay, Mr. L.K. Jha and Mr. B.K. Nehru, who have done tremendous service to the people of the State. We benefited so much from their advice and their guidance and I feel it would not have been possible to achieve the progress in every field, without them at the helm of affairs. With the passage of time and change of circumstances Governors became puppets of the Centre. From the constitutional Head of State they shrank to the level of becoming flunkies of the Union Home Ministry. This has almost destroyed this institution. A meeting of some experienced members of Parliament and some MLAs from different States should be convened to suggest a method for the selection of a Governor. But once he is appointed he should serve a full term. He should neither be transferred nor removed.

I Believe

My party, the National Conference, and I believe that the nation is most important. India is important and supreme and when we call it motherland there is no question of being anything but national. Our attitude and our programme of new Kashmir, in many ways, reflects national views on important issues. I feel that unity of the nation, with all the diversity that exists in terrain, religion, or customs, it is important to build a strong and united nation. There cannot be two views about it. If the nation is strong then different States and every individual Indian, will be strong. The nation should come before everything else—region, caste, creed and religion.

The country today faces the spectre of naked communalism. This has been the bane of this subcontinent ever since the British conquered it. We were not infected with this disease before the British arrived in India. In the South, where Tipu Sultan was ruling, his advisors, ministers, commanders and generals belonged to different religions. Here in the North, we have been invaded a number of times by Moslems. We adopted a number of good points of the invaders and in turn gave them some. We assimilated what we learnt. When the British came in, they started to divide and rule and for their own ends, sowed the seeds of hatred. This has been our history. Today the situation in the country is that communalism is the main destructive force in the Nation. Jawaharlal Nehru hit the nail on the head when once, while addressing the officers of the Foreign Office, he said that the greatest danger to India was not from communism or imperialism or attack from a foreign enemy but it is from the monster of communalism. How true and prophetic! The only real danger to the unity and integrity of India is communalism. This virus should be isolated, thrown away and buried for ever down into the Indian Ocean. All those parties

which are professedly communal should be exposed at all levels; merely banning them will not end it. Every Indian should be told of the danger from such elements. Unless this is done we will not be able to build a strong nation. I do not consider casteism different from communalism. Every effort should be made to raise the level of the weaker sections of our society in order to save this nation from disintegration.

We should not get involved with and blinded by ideologies and different isms. We should not close our doors and windows but should allow whiff of fresh air to come in all the time. Some of our leaders think that only by upliftment of a village can we get on and progress. Others feel that industrialisation is the only answer to all our ills. I feel that we should strike a balance between agriculture and industry. We should not develop one at the cost of the other. Some believe that multinationals have no place in our scheme of things. I believe that multinationals have the finances, the resources, and the benefit of advanced technology already developed by other countries. We neither have resources nor the time to develop our own technical know-how. Then there should be balanced development of large-scale and medium-scale and small-scale industry. We should take good points of all the systems, put them together and use them in the service of our people for speedy progress forward. Pragmatism should be our watchword.

The democracy of our concept is at stake. It has been derailed. The democratic institutions have been devalued. The legislature which is supreme in the political field, should be restored to its high pedestal by having truly fair and free elections so that the right people become members who will do good to the people rather than for themselves. Erosion of other key institutions should be stopped. The judiciary is the second important pivot of democracy. If appointments in it are made on basis of political loyalties or only committed judges are preferred, then it will harm the very foundations of democracy. We will have to make certain that those who are inducted into this service, are just and above board. The third important pillar is the bureaucracy which handles the process of governance. This should be completely depoliticised. A bureaucrat should not be committed to any political ideology or party. The bureaucracy should be committed to the nation not to politics.

Then the law-enforcing authority should be secular and non-political. It should, as far as possible, represent all faiths and regions, so that it is truly representative of the nation. All these institutions should be strengthened and this alone will safeguard the Indian democracy. At present, all these institutions have been damaged, battered and hammered, for convenience of a few individuals. We are being moved towards an authoritarian system. In this context violence should be completely eliminated from our body politic for democracy and violence are incompatible. When people are denied democratic rights they resort to violence as a shortcut. Many such instances are available all round India. In an authoritarian system people have no rights, only the rulers have rights, and they exercise them with a vengeance. We should not forget that violence begets violence, hatred begets hatred and love begets love. We have therefore to ensure that democratic processes started in 1947 are fully strengthened and the scope of violence is removed. People should be educated about their duties as much as about their rights. We should be able to give more to the nation than take from her. Every one of us has to play his part to make the nation strong and save India. Authoritarianism and federalism also are incompatible because in an authoritarian system there has to be only one authority vested centrally at Delhi and there cannot be States having powers. Or are we witnessing the twilight of federalism? My concept of federalism is a strong Centre having strong States as links. They should be interdependent. They should work in tandem, not pull in opposite directions. If any State is weak, the Centre cannot be strong, therefore, it is for the Centre to ensure that all the States are strong. At the Srinagar Conclave in October 1983 we had felt that after 37 years of experience it was proper that some adjustments in Centre-State relationship be made. There was no conspiracy to weaken the Centre. Time has come when we should have a national debate on this problem.

This is in a way linked with the special status enjoyed by Kashmir. As far as my party and I are concerned there is no question of any dispute about Kashmir. We acceded to the Indian Union long ago. We are part of India as much as any other State. Those who talk of accession still being incomplete are trying to fish in troubled waters, at the cost of the people of

Jammu & Kashmir and its progress. Their basic aim is to keep the pot boiling, because they do not want either peace or progress in this sub-continent. They do not want stability in India because then India will be tremendously strong which is not liked by many foreign powers. We have become part of the world power struggle. That is why it is raised only in international forums. For us accession of Jammu & Kashmir to India is complete, final and irrevocable. We will not allow this to be reopened in any case. We are, however, concerned about that part of our State which is still under the illegal occupation of Pakistan. People there do not want to be part of Pakistan but because of the big presence of the Pakistani Army they cannot express their true feelings and desire. But India must make some moves in friendly circles, for the return of that territory. If we cannot get this territory back by normal negotiations, then other means except war, should be adopted. I am sure that once this territory reunites with the rest of the State, our relations with Pakistan will improve rapidly, because then the bone of contention will be out of the way. But negotiations have to be started earnestly.

I am not saying this because I have ambitions to be an all-India leader. Some say I want to become leader of all Indian Moslems. Kashmir had lived in isolation all these years but when I assumed power I plunged fully into national politics. I felt that unless we felt part of the nation there could be no realisation of each other's problems. I was able to forge understanding with major political parties. I visited many parts of the country to tell the nation that we are one nation and there is no question of Kashmiri going in a different direction. I felt that after Maulana Azad, Rafi Ahmed Kidwai, Sheikh Abdullah, the Moslems were feeling leaderless. They felt like a small boat in a big ocean, not knowing where the boat will take them. I felt it my duty that I should tell them that they all belonged to India and therefore there was no question of being leaderless. We are all going to move together because problems of all Indians are the same and common. We should give up narrow thinking and be part of the mainstream. In that alone lies our salvation. Were we asked at the time of partition whether we wanted it? It was the leaders who took decisions of their liking. All those born after Independence have nothing

to do with it. Moslems as a whole should have no guilt of being responsible for the Partition. I go round the country telling Moslems that they belong to India and should live and act like Indians and not as aliens. They should fully identify themselves with others. I do not think in narrow compartments and, therefore, there is no question of my wanting to be a leader of the Moslems.

The minorities in India suffer from an inferiority complex which has grown in past 37 years. Minorities to whatever religion they may belong to, have been used in various States by unscrupulous politicians as voting blocs. They have not been treated as human beings. They too have problems and aspirations like others which need to be looked into. This can be overcome if the Government treats them as equals providing equal opportunity for every advancement. Minorities Commissions are of not much help because most of their recommendations are either not accepted or not implemented. Minorities should be drawn into the mainstream of national life. They are the sacred trust of the majority everywhere.

In our own state, we have three regions with the majority of population professing different religions. For me these three regions of Ladakh, Jammu and Kashmir, are of equal importance. I have never entertained any thought of developing any region at the cost of the other. Separation of any one region from the other two is unthinkable. It is unfortunate that some political elements use regional differences to embitter their relations and create hatred among people of the State. Such ideas do not strengthen our country for ours is a border State with China and Pakistan occupying large chunks of our territory. This was one reason why I supported the grant of Scheduled Tribes status to Ladakhis and to the people living in the border areas of Jammu & Kashmir. The aspirations of the people of every region should be respected. If there is discontent and dissatisfaction in any area or region, India cannot be strong. A Scottish system could be considered for Jammu region:

I have faith in India and I have faith in its people. If we all stand together forgetting petty rivalries and differences we can make India strong and great. Let us not wait for the others to start, let us do our bit and the rest will follow.

Annexures

A. Text of Letter Dated 2nd July 1984, from the Governor, Jammu & Kashmir, Srinagar, to Dr. Farooq Abdullah

Most Immediate

Raj Bhavan
Srinagar
D.O. No. GS-1 (PAG) 84
July 2, 1984 (7 a.m.)

My dear Chief Minister,

Thirteen MLAs of the Legislative Assembly of J and K (12 of the National Conference party and one Independent) have approached me in person this morning. They told me and have given in writing that they have withdrawn their support to your Government and pledged their support to Shri Gh. Mohammed Shah, MLC. Simultaneously, Moulvi Iftikhar Hussain Ansari, MLA, and leader of the Congress-I legislature party, J and K, has informed me in writing and in person that the Congress-I legislature party having strength of 26 MLAs, has decided to support Shri Gh. Mohammed Shah. A copy of each of the communications is enclosed.

I am satisfied that you no longer enjoy the majority support of the legislative assembly and have, therefore, forfeited the right to continue as Chief Minister, and to head the Government.

In these circumstances, I advise you to submit your resignation as Chief Minister, forthwith.

With kind regards,

Yours Sincerely,
Jagmohan

Mr. Farooq Abdullah,
Chief Minister of J and K
Srinagar.

P.S. We have since met and discussed the matter. You advised me to impose Governor's rule under Section 92 of the Jammu and Kashmir Constitution and kept the Legislative Assembly in suspended animation. I shall be grateful if you could kindly send me your confirmation in this regard in writing immediately.

B. Text of Letter Dated 2nd July 1984, from Dr. Farooq Abdullah, Chief Minister, to Governor J & K

Srinagar
July 2, 1984

The Governor of Jammu & Kashmir
Raj Bhavan
Srinagar
My dear Governor,

I am in receipt of your letter D.O.No.GS-1 (PAG) dated 2nd July 1984, as also its enclosures. I have considered the matter in depth in consultation with the colleagues of my cabinet and wish to inform you that democratic traditions require that the question of loss of confidence should always be tested on the floor of the House. In fact the letter addressed to Your Excellency by signatories makes reference to letter shown to have been addressed to you on 28th June 1984 and contents whereof are not known to me. Anyway I don't feel you are not in the know of anti-defection law in the State which disqualifies a member for violation of the whip. The twelve signatories including two nominated members have lost their right to vote and as such all that they have written cannot be of any consequence. I would on behalf of the Cabinet and myself advise you to immediately summon the session of the Legislature so that confidence of the Legislature enjoyed by me is demonstrated.

In the latter part of the letter you have referred to a discussion which you had with me early this morning that I advised you to impose the Governor's Rule under Section 92 of the Constitution. No doubt we discussed alternatives but all those options are available on my failure to show that I enjoy confidence of the Legislature which can be demonstrated on the floor of the House. I therefore reiterate that the Assembly be sum-

moned forthwith so that on my failure to demonstrate confidence of the House we can next consider the options available to us under the Constitution. I on behalf of my Cabinet would request you to accept our advice of dissolving the Legislative Assembly so that we go back to our people.

With kind regards,

Yours sincerely,
Farooq Abdullah

*C. Text of Letter Dated 2nd July 1984, from the Governor
J & K to Mr. Farooq Abdullah, Chief Minister*

Most Immediate

Raj Bhavan,
Srinagar
D.O. No. GS-1, (PAG) 84
July 2, 1984

My dear Chief Minister,

This is with reference to my D.O. letter of even number and date and your reply thereto as well as the discussions we had this morning.

I am satisfied that you have lost confidence of the majority of the MLAs in the Legislative Assembly. I therefore, regret to inform you that I have dismissed you from the Chief Ministership of the State and dissolved the Council of Ministers headed by you.

With kind regards,

Yours sincerely
Jagmohan

Mr. Farooq Abdullah,
Chief Minister of J & K
Srinagar.

Press Release from Raj Bhavan, Srinagar on July 2, 1984

Today, the 2nd of July, 1984, 13 members of the J & K State Legislative Assembly, 12 belonging to the National Conference and one Independent (list enclosed) met the Governor in the

early morning, pledging their support to Shri G.M. Shah, MLC (NC). Shri Shah led this group of MLAs who all personally appeared before the Governor, Shri Shah submitted a letter on behalf of the abovementioned 12 members of Assembly belonging to the National Conference duly signed by each one of them authenticating the withdrawal of their support to the Chief Minister Dr. Farooq Abdullah. In the letter they have also said that Dr. Farooq Abdullah had lost the confidence of majority of members of the Legislative Assembly and that they had elected Shri G.M. Shah, MLC, as their leader and requested the Governor to call upon Shri G.M. Shah, to form a Government for the State.

Shri Ali Mohammed Naik, MLA (Ind) also handed over a letter to the Governor pledging his support to Shri G.M. Shah, MLC, and requesting the Governor to call upon Shri Shah to form an alternative Government.

Simultaneously Moulvi Iftikhar Hussain Ansari, MLA, leader of the Congress (I) Legislature Party J & K presented a letter to the Governor in person informing the latter that the Congress (I) Legislature Party which has 26 members in the Legislative Assembly had decided to support Shri G.M. Shah.

The Governor after counting the aforesaid 13 MLAs and getting them identified to his satisfaction, called the Chief Minister, Dr. Farooq Abdullah to his office to inform him about the abovementioned events of this morning. He further told the Chief Minister that he did not enjoy the support of the majority of the Legislative Assembly members and had forfeited his right to continue as Chief Minister and to head the State Government. Under these circumstances the Governor advised Dr. Farooq Abdullah to submit his resignation as Chief Minister. The Chief Minister suggested summoning of the Assembly for trial of strength and in the alternative to dissolve the Assembly.

Since the Chief Minister has lost confidence of the majority of the Legislative Assembly, a conclusive evidence of which was provided to the Governor by presentation of 13 MLAs before him and the letter of Moulvi Iftikhar Hussain Ansari referred to in para 3 above, which was presented in person, the question of accepting the advice of the Chief Minister could not arise.

The Governor being satisfied that Shri G.M. Shah enjoyed the confidence of the majority of the MLAs, invited him to form the Government, *subject to the condition that he would again prove his majority on the floor of the House, within one month from the date of assuming office.* The Governor also asked him to submit a list of the members of his Council of Ministers who are to be sworn in. Pursuant to this, a letter recommending 14 names, besides himself, for being sworn in, was received by the Governor and accordingly the oath of office in secrecy was administered to them.

Shri G.M. Shah in his aforesaid letter has assured the Governor that he would once again prove his majority on the floor of the House within the time stipulated by the Governor.

List of MLAs

<i>Name</i>	<i>Constituency</i>
Sarva Shri	
1. Hissam Din Bandey	Hazratbal
2. Munshi Habib-Ullah	Kargil
3. Talib Hussain	Rajouri
4. Dr. Mehboob Beg	Sarnal (Anantnag)
5. Sheikh Abdul Jabbar	Lar (Ganedrbal)
6. Sona Ullah Dar	Pulwama
7. Ghulam Hassan Mir	Gulmarg
8. Mohammed Khalil Jowhar	Bandipora
9. Hakim Mohammad Yasin	Khan Sahib
10. Mohammed Dilawar Mir	Rafiabad
11. Ali Mohammed Naik	Tral
12. Shrimati Khem Lalla Wakhloo	Nominated
13. Shrimati Gurbachan Kumar Rana	Nominated

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