

*The Emergence and Development of the  
Jama'at-i-Islami of Jammu and Kashmir  
(1940s–1990)*

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**Introduction**

The Jama'at-i-Islami is, by far, one of the most influential Islamic movements in the world today, particularly strong in the countries of South Asia. Its influence extends far beyond the confines of the Indo-Pakistan subcontinent, and the writings of its chief ideologues have exercised a powerful impact on contemporary Muslim thinking all over the world. Much has been written about the movement, both by its leaders and followers as well as by its critics. Most of these writings have focused either on the Jama'at's ideology or on its historical development in India and Pakistan.<sup>1</sup> Hardly any literature is available on the evolution and history of the Jama'at in the disputed state of Jammu and Kashmir. This is unfortunate, because here the Jama'at has had a long history of its own, which has followed a path quite distinct from the branches of the movement in both India and Pakistan. Furthermore, the Jama'at has played a crucial role in the politics of Kashmir right since its inception in the late 1940s, a role that has gained particular salience in the course of the armed struggle in the region that began in the late 1980s and still shows no sign of abating.

Little serious academic work on the Jama'at-i-Islami of Jammu and Kashmir (JIJK) has been attempted so far. Most of what passes for 'authoritative' information on the JIJK are impressionistic accounts by journalists and politicians, that either extol its role as brave 'warriors of Islam' or, alternatively, as 'Islamic fundamentalists' or

<sup>1</sup> See, for instance, Seyyed Vali Reza Nasr, *The Vanguard of the Islamic Revolution: The Jama'at-i-Islami of Pakistan* (London and New York: I. B. Tauris, London and New York, 1994), and, by the same author, *Maududi and the Making of Islamic Revivalism* (Oxford University Press, Oxford and New York, 1996).

‘Muslim terrorists’. The historical development of the JJK in the changing socio-political context of Kashmir is completely ignored in these obviously prejudiced and entirely one-sided descriptions. They tell us next to nothing as to why and how the JJK managed, over the years, from its inception in the late 1940s till the outbreak of the armed struggle in Kashmir in 1989, to make deep inroads into Kashmiri Muslim society, creating a large support base for itself. What was it that made for the growing appeal of the JJK’s expression of Islam, based on a strict adherence to the Islamic law (*shari‘at*), in a society known for its popular Sufi traditions, where Muslims hardly differed from their Hindu neighbours in most respects? The standard Indian explanation, repeated *ad nauseum* by Indian journalists and politicians alike, is that the rapid rise of the power and influence of the JJK is simply a post-1990 phenomenon, with the organization having been propped up and liberally financed by Pakistan. This, however, as I shall attempt to show, is a clear misreading of the phenomenon. While it is true that the JJK has, indeed, received moral and political backing from Pakistan, and while there is ample evidence to show that the Hizb-ul Mujahidin, the armed group thought to be associated with the JJK, has been a key beneficiary of Pakistani assistance, the growth and spread of the JJK as a strong force in Kashmir must be traced to much earlier than 1990. The increasing popularity of the JJK has much to do with structural, situational and ideational factors specific to the changing contours of the general socio-political context of Kashmir, from 1948, when it came under Indian control, to 1989, the year that marks the onset of the armed struggle in the region.

This article seeks to trace the historical development of the JJK in the Indian-administered part of the State, from its inception in the early 1940s, to the late 1980s, when it was declared a banned organization by the Indian authorities for its involvement in the armed struggle for Kashmiri self-determination. This period is crucial, neglected though it is in contemporary journalistic accounts of the JJK, for it was then that the organization grew into a force to be reckoned with, with a following running into tens of thousands. The basic argument that this article develops is that the origins and subsequent growth of the JJK in the period 1948–1990 must be seen in relation to the changing social contexts of the times, in which a more assertive and activist expression of Islam came to be increasingly articulated by sections of a newly-emerging Muslim Kashmiri middle-class. Till the late 1980s, before the onset of the armed

struggle in Kashmir, the core support base of the JJK was, despite its sustained efforts at expansion, largely limited to this class. This had, as we shall seek to show, much to do with the Jama'at's own style of operation, the issues that it focused on, as well as its opposition to popular forms of Islamic expression that are still very deeply rooted in Kashmir despite the efforts of generations of Islamic reformers.

The article begins with a brief overview of the ideology of the JJK and its organizational structure. Next, it places the growth of the JJK in the historical context of growing Kashmiri Muslim awakening, first against Dogra rule, and then, after 1947, against Indian control. It then goes on to deal with the actual development of the JJK in the period under discussion, looking at the organization's activities and policies as they developed over time, and reflecting on how it was that it emerged as a powerful party on the eve of the launching of the armed struggle in Kashmir in 1989/90.

### Ideology

The JJK shares a common ideological framework with branches of the Jama'at elsewhere, based as it is on the voluminous writings of its founder, Maulana Sayyed 'Ala Maududi (1903–79). Maududi's writings have been extensively studied elsewhere, and so need not detain us here. Put briefly, Maududi sees Islam as a complete ideology and code of life (*nizam-i-hayat*), covering all aspects of a Muslim's personal as well as collective existence. For Islam to be enforced in its entirety, it is necessary for Muslims to struggle for the establishment of an Islamic state or states, ruled by the Islamic law. Democracy, or the rule of the people, is seen as un-Islamic, for it is said to go against the Islamic understanding of God as the sovereign authority and law-maker. For the same reason, Western-style secularism, the separation of religion and politics, is condemned.

The JJK expresses its commitment to this understanding in the preamble to its constitution, first adopted in November 1953, and later modified by its *majlis-i-shura* (Central Advisory Committee), first in March 1969 and then again, at a meeting of its *majlis-i-irkan* (Council of Basic Members), in August 1985.<sup>2</sup> Here, it describes its 'creed' as 'There is no God but Allah and Muhammad [may peace

<sup>2</sup> *The Constitution of the Jama'at-i-Islami Jammu and Kashmir*, Department of Publications and Publicity, Jama'at-i-Islami Jammu and Kashmir, Srinagar, n.d.

and God's choicest blessings be upon him!]) is His messenger', and explains this as follows:

The first part of this faith, regarding the unity and uniqueness of God as the Supreme Deity and the negation of the existence of any other being worthy of being worshipped, implies that the Earth and the skies, i.e., the whole Universe and whatever exists therein, owe their existence to God, who has created them—the Sustainer, the Controller, the Law-giver, the Rightful Deity and the Lord of us all.<sup>3</sup>

It then goes on to elaborate on this first part of the Islamic creed of confession. The unity of God, it says, implies that a Muslim is one who 'deems or recognises none except Allah . . . as real ruler, patron, fulfiller of desires, provider of needs, protector and helper' and accepts 'no one [else] as the Lord of the Worlds, the Supreme Authority, the Most Powerful'. God alone, it asserts, has 'the authority to command or forbid', and hence 'to recognise any mortal's authority to be an absolute law-giver or legislator . . . [is] violative of His law'. Consequently, every Muslim 'must make the likes and dislikes of Allah the sole criterion of his/her own likes and dislikes'. In accordance with this, a true believer should, 'in matters concerning moral behaviour and conduct of social, cultural, political and economic activities—in short, in every sphere of activity—allow himself/herself to be guided by the guidance of Allah'. He or she must 'acknowledge only the Divine code, rejecting any other code which is not in consonance with His Command and Guidance, and whose divinity has not been established'.<sup>4</sup>

Elaborating on the second part of the Islamic creed, the JJK's constitution explains that a true Muslim is one who believes that Muhammad is God's last messenger, whose message is meant for all humanity, for all times to come. The Prophet has been commissioned by God to 'set an example for all human beings'. Thus, it is obligatory for a Muslim to 'accept, without questioning, whatever teaching and guidance stands proved to have emanated from the Holy Prophet Muhammad' and to desist from whatever the Prophet has forbidden. None but the Prophet must be acknowledged as 'the permanent and absolute leader', and his practice (*sunnah*), along with the Qur'an, should be the only source of guidance in one's personal and collective life.<sup>5</sup>

<sup>3</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 4.

<sup>4</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 5–7.

<sup>5</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 7.

The constitution then goes on to discuss the primary objective of the JJK, which it describes as striving to 'establish God's religion' (*iqamat-i-din*), inspired, it says, 'by the sole desire to earn Divine pleasure and secure success in the Hereafter'. The *din*, it adds, is that religion that has been taught by all the many prophets whom God has sent through the ages, revealed in its 'final and perfect form' through the last of the prophets, Muhammad. This religion is Islam, the only 'authentic, pristine existing *din*' and the only one which is 'sanctioned by Allah'.<sup>6</sup>

In order to establish the *din* in its entirety, the JJK constitution lays down that in the furtherance of its objectives it shall be guided only by the Qur'an and the Prophetic *sunnah*, while 'other things, viewed as secondary, shall be taken into consideration provided they are not outside the scope of Islam'. In this regard, the JJK shall not, it says, 'employ ways and means against ethics, truthfulness and honesty or which may contribute to strife on earth'. It shall, on the other hand, 'use democratic and constitutional methods while working for the reform and righteous revolution'.<sup>7</sup>

The JJK sees every Muslim, male as well as female, as playing an important role in the 'establishment of the *din*'. However, for this purpose, it sees the need for a special Islamic party (*jama'at*) to be established to lead the struggle. The JJK sees itself as this party, which every 'conscious' (*ba-sha'ur*) Muslim should be associated with.<sup>8</sup> Accordingly, membership of the JJK is open to any person, irrespective of caste, linguistic group, race or tribe, who agrees with its understanding of the Islamic creed and, on doing so, consents to be governed by its rules.<sup>9</sup>

Taking a pragmatic stand on the matter, the JJK recognizes that after joining the *jama'at*, its members 'shall have to change themselves gradually'. The minimum that is required, however, is that they should 'at least know the difference between Islam and *Jahiliyat* (ignorance)', be 'conversant with the limits imposed by Allah', offer the regular prayers, the supererogatory prayers (*nafil*), engage in *zikr* (remembrance of God) and regularly recite the Qur'an. Further, they should 'submit before Allah's injunctions', abandon all customs, practices and beliefs that are in conflict with the Qur'an and the *sunnah*

<sup>6</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 8.

<sup>7</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 9.

<sup>8</sup> Sayyed 'Ali Shah Gilani, *Rudad-i-Qafs* (vol. 1) (Al-Huda Publishing House, Srinagar, 1993), p. 149.

<sup>9</sup> *Constitution*, p. 10.

of the Prophet, and lead a pious life. They should, as far as possible, 'not have any close social relations, apart from ordinary human relations, with morally corrupt people and those who have forgotten God'. Instead, they should 'keep contact with righteous and God-fearing people'. They must focus 'all their activities' on the mission of establishing the *din* and 'disassociate from all such activities, except real and essential needs of life, as may not lead towards the set goal'. They should see their mission in life as presenting to others 'the creed and the objective of *iqamat-i-din*'.<sup>10</sup>

Two salient features of the ideology of the JJK as set out here are particularly noteworthy. The first is a distinct opposition to Western-style democracy and secularism, based as these are on the concept of the sovereignty of Man, as opposed to the sovereignty of God, and on the principle that religion should have no bearing on public affairs. Second, an implicit challenge to popular Sufism, in which Sufi saints, living and dead, are believed to be able to intercede with God on behalf of a believer. This belief is seen as standing in sharp contradistinction to Islamic monotheism. By stressing the need for the institutions and processes of society at large to be based on Islamic law, the JJK effectively challenges the individual piety associated with popular Sufism, which is typically seen as world-renouncing and in opposition to Islam's stress on balanced worldly involvement. Calls for creating a society based on the *shari'at* can be seen as a sharp critique of many practices associated with popular Kashmiri Sufism that are said to have no basis in Islamic law.

### Organizational Structure

The JJK follows a consultative method of functioning, headed by the President (*amir-i-jama'at*) and a team, the *markazi majlis-i-shur'a* (Central Advisory Council), who are elected by the Council of Representatives. The members of the latter body are chosen by the basic members of the JJK (*irkan-i-jama'at*), the *amir* and the secretary-general (*qayyim-i-jama'at*). They hold office, ordinarily, for a three-year term. They together elect and can remove the *amir* and the members of the Central Advisory Committee.<sup>11</sup>

The *amir* is the head of the JJK. The members of the organization are 'bound to obey him' as long as his commands are in accordance

<sup>10</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 11–12.

<sup>11</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 13.

with the teachings of Islam, but in this, obedience is to be paid not to the person or the office of the *amir* as such, but, rather, to the directives of Islam and the mission of the JJK. For his part, in matters of morals, piety and commitment, the *amir* should 'on the whole, be the best of all in the *jama'at*'. His term ordinarily runs for three years, but he may, if the Council of Representatives so agrees, be elected repeatedly to the office.<sup>12</sup> The *amir* carries on his functions with the help of advice from the Central Advisory Council, members of which, again, hold office, under ordinary circumstances, for a period of three years. Their basic function is to oversee the functioning of the organization. They must also 'keep a watch on the *amir*'.<sup>13</sup>

The organizational structure of the central level leadership of the JJK is replicated at the lower levels. The JJK has two provincial wings in the Indian-administered part of the state—one being the Kashmir valley and the other being Jammu. Each provincial wing is headed by a provincial *amir* (*amir-i-suba*), who is assisted by a Provincial Advisory Council (*suba'i majlis-i-shur'a*) and a provincial secretary (*qayyim-i-suba*). The chain of command and authority is then further carried down to the district level, where, in each district, the JJK has a district *amir* (*amir-i-zila*), a District Advisory Council (*majlis-i-zila*) and a secretary (*qayyim-i-zila*). The JJK has a similar set-up at the sub-district level (*tehsil*), and, finally, at the local (*muqami*) level, where it has a system of 'circles' (*halqa*). A circle of the JJK can be set up wherever there is more than one member of the organization. It is headed by a local *amir* (*amir-i-halqa*), who is elected by the local members.<sup>14</sup>

### **Kashmir in the Early Twentieth Century: The Socio-Political Context**

Under the Hindu Dogra rulers, Muslims, who formed the vast majority of the population of the state of Jammu and Kashmir, accounting for over 80% of the population, remained an ill-treated, oppressed community, mired in poverty and almost completely illiterate. The Raja treated the entire state as his personal possession. In a letter

<sup>12</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 17–21.

<sup>13</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 22–6.

<sup>14</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 30–45.

to the British Resident in 1897, the then Dogra king, Maharaja Pratap Singh, wrote, 'The state is my property and belongs to me and it is all my hereditary property'.<sup>15</sup> Most lands were owned by the Raja himself, a small class of the Dogra feudal nobility and the Kashmiri Pandits, who exercised a virtual monopoly in the state services. In 1921, a Pandit writer noted that 90% of the houses of the Muslims of Srinagar, the state capital, were mortgaged to Hindu money-lenders.<sup>16</sup> As Prem Nath Bazaz, one of the few Kashmiri Pandits to have sympathized with the plight of his Muslim countrymen and to have supported them in their cause for freedom, wrote, 'Dressed in rags which could hardly hide his body, and barefooted, a [Kashmiri] Muslim peasant presented the appearance rather of a starving beggar than one who filled the coffers of the state'. Most Kashmiri Muslim villagers, he said, were 'landless labourers working for absentee landlords. They hardly earned, as their share of the produce, enough for more than three months', being forced to spend the rest of the year unemployed or labouring in the towns in British India.<sup>17</sup>

The origins of Islamic reformism in Kashmir, of which the JJK is a product, may be traced back to the late nineteenth century, which witnessed the birth of new stirrings among the urban Kashmiri Muslim middle-class, championing the interests of the Muslim majority community against Dogra rule. One of the pioneers in this regard was the Mirwa'iz of Kashmir, Maulana Rasul Shah (1855–1909), head of Srinagar's Jami'a Mosque. Distressed by the pathetic conditions of his people and with the widespread prevalence of what he saw as un-Islamic 'innovations' (*bida'at*) among them, he established the Anjuman Nusrat ul-Islam ('The Society for the Victory of Islam') in 1899. The Anjuman aimed at spreading modern as well as Islamic education, based strictly on the Qur'an and Hadith, combating *bida'at*, as well as creating political awareness among the Muslims of the state.<sup>18</sup> Through mass meetings and personal contacts, the Mirwa'iz and his associates preached against the superstitions

<sup>15</sup> Cited in *Kashmir War: A Proxy War* (Committee for Initiative on Kashmir, New Delhi, 1993), p. 34.

<sup>16</sup> Sumantra Bose, *The Challenge in Kashmir: Democracy, Self-Determination and a Just Peace* (Sage Publications, New Delhi, 1997), p. 24.

<sup>17</sup> Cited in *Kashmir War*, p. 34.

<sup>18</sup> Muhammad Sa'id-ur Rahman Faruq, *Kashmir Mai Islam Ki Amad Aur Wirwa izin-i-Kashmir Ki Khidmat* (Idara-i-Tasnif-o-Ta'alif, Mirwa'iz Manzil, Srinagar, n.d.), p.



and practices that had crept into popular Sufism, calling for Muslims to mould their lives according to the *shari'ah*, and, 'to become real Muslims (*haqiqi musulaman*) and true human beings (*sahih insan*)'.<sup>19</sup> The Mirwa'iz seems to have encountered stiff opposition from some quarters, notably from some custodians of Sufi shrines, but his efforts at preaching his reformist doctrines earned him considerable popularity, being given the title of 'the Sir Sayyed of Kashmir' (*sir sayyed-i-kashmir*).<sup>20</sup>

In 1905, the Anjuman set up the Islamiya High School in Srinagar, where modern scientific as well as Islamic education were imparted, and, over the years, it developed several branches in small towns in Kashmir. Rasul Shah was succeeded by his younger brother, Mirwa'iz Ahmadullah, who expanded the work of the Anjuman further, setting up an Oriental College in Srinagar.<sup>21</sup> Under his successor, Mirwa'iz Maulana Muhammad Yusuf Shah, the Anjuman developed links with Islamic reformist groups in India. Yusuf Shah was himself a product of the reformist Dar-ul 'Ulum *madrassa* at Deoband,<sup>22</sup> and after he returned to Kashmir on completion of his studies in 1924, he set up a branch of the Khilafat Committee to popularize the cause of the Ottoman Caliphate among the Kashmiris. Later, he played a central role in bringing many reform-minded Kashmiri *'ulama*, mainly Deobandis opposed to popular Sufism, onto a common platform, the Jami'at-ul 'Ulama-i-Kashmir ('The Union of 'Ulama of Kashmir'). To popularize the reformist cause, Yusuf Shah set up the first press in Kashmir, the Muslim Printing Press, launching two weeklies, *al-Islam* and *Rahnuma*, to broadcast the views of the Deobandis and to combat what were seen as the un-Islamic practices of the Kashmiri Muslims. He also translated and published the first Kashmiri translation of and commentary on the Qur'an, so that ordinary Kashmiris could understand the Qur'an themselves, rather than having to depend on the custodians of shrines for their religious instruction.<sup>23</sup>

<sup>19</sup> Shoba Tasnif-o-Ta'alif, *Anjuman Nusrat-ul Islam-i-Kashmir: Tarikh, Khidmat, Mansube* (Anjuman Nusrat-ul Islam, Srinagar, 1982), p. 6.

<sup>20</sup> *Sir Sayyed-i-Kashmir Hazrat Maulana Rasul Shah Sahib* (Anjuman Nusrat-ul Islam, Srinagar, n.d.). Sir Sayyed Ahmad Khan was the noted nineteenth-century Indian Muslim educationist, a pioneer in promoting modern education among the Indian Muslims.

<sup>21</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 7.

<sup>22</sup> A full-length study of the Deobandis is to be found in Barbara Daly Metcalf, *Islamic Revivalism in British India: Deoband 1860-1900* (Princeton University Press, Princeton, 1982).

<sup>23</sup> *Sir Sayyed*, pp. 22-3.

In the early twentieth century, links with Muslim groups in other parts of India, notably the Punjab, Delhi and Aligarh, brought a new breed of emerging and educated Kashmiri Muslims in touch with Islamic stirrings outside the state. This growing Islamic consciousness first manifested itself in the form of the Ahl-i-Hadith, a Muslim reformist movement whose origins in South Asia go back to the late eighteenth century. The Ahl-i-Hadith saw the decline of the Muslims as a result of their having strayed from the path of the Prophet and from strict monotheism (*tauhid*), and sought to purge Muslim society of what it saw as ‘un-Islamic’ accretions, most notably the ‘blind following’ (*taqlid*) of the four schools of jurisprudence (*mazahib*) and the beliefs and practices associated with Sufism.

In Kashmir, the origins of the Ahl-i-Hadith go back to the late nineteenth century, when a Kashmiri student of an Ahl-i-Hadith *madrasa* in Delhi, Sayyed Hussain Shah Batku, returned to Srinagar and began a campaign against the unlawful ‘innovations’ which he saw his fellow Muslims wallowed in.<sup>24</sup> As in India, the Ahl-i-Hadith in Kashmir did not manage to secure a mass base, however, owing principally to the fact that the Kashmiri Muslims were deeply rooted in their Sufi traditions. Khan, in his study of the history of Srinagar, writes that by the early 1920s, prior to the arrival of the Ahl-i-Hadith, Sufi shrines, to be found in almost every street in the town, had emerged as ‘the chief centres of superstition and charlatanism’, controlled by ‘crafty, hypocritical and materialist mullahs’, who ‘kept the common folk in the dark’. Priesthood, an institution foreign to pristine Islam, was deeply entrenched, with the custodians of the Sufi shrines emerging as ‘an important exploiting agency in an organised manner’. For most Kashmiris, Islam seems to have been ‘nothing more than the observance of a certain set of rituals’. Khan sees the Ahl-i-Hadith as the first organized effort in Kashmir to raise its voice against these ‘superstitious practices’ and to appeal to Muslims to reform their beliefs and customs in line with the *shari‘ah*.<sup>25</sup> Although eventually the Ahl-i-Hadith failed in its efforts to extirpate *bida‘at* in Kashmir, its reformist agenda did pave way for the JJK to attempt, in the years that followed, to follow in the same path, albeit in what was certainly a less direct and threatening manner.

<sup>24</sup> Bashir Ahmad Khan, ‘The Ahl-i-Hadith: A Socio-Religious Reform Movement in Kashmir’, *The Muslim World*, vol. 90, nos 1 and 2, Spring 2000, p. 133.

<sup>25</sup> Mohammad Ishaq Khan, *History of Srinagar (1846–1947): A Study in Socio-Cultural Change* (Manohar, 1999), pp. 109–12.

By the early years of the twentieth century, the growing awareness of their oppression at the hands of the Dogra rulers goaded the emerging generation of educated Kashmiri Muslims, influenced by new stirrings of Islamic reformism, to seek measures to redress their grievances. An event of great significance in the evolution of Kashmiri Muslim political consciousness was the mass agitation that erupted in the valley in 1930, in protest against the desecration of the Qur'an by a Dogra soldier stationed in Srinagar. The agitation soon took the form of a popular movement, with demands being made for an end to the oppressive Dogra rule. This movement gave birth to the Muslim Conference in 1931, headed by the charismatic Sheikh 'Abdullah, championing the cause of the Muslims of the state and calling for the institution of democratic rule.

Pitted as they were against the Dogra state, which openly projected itself as a defender of Hinduism, and against the entrenched Pandit elite, who exercised a virtual monopoly in the administration and, in addition, owned vast estates, it was but natural that the growing assertion and awakening among the Kashmiri Muslims would seek to define itself in religious terms, and that, as the mass movement that erupted in the wake of the Qur'an desecration incident in 1930 so strikingly illustrates, Islam would be a powerful idiom in articulating protest and opposition to the regime and local elites. This does not, however, mean that the Kashmiri Muslim movement was directed against the Hindus as a community as such. As Prem Nath Bazaz, a noted Kashmiri Pandit politician observed of the agitation against the oppressive Dogras, 'Though conducted by the Muslims, the struggle was national in essence. It was a fight of the tyrannised against the tyrants, of the oppressed against the oppressors'.<sup>26</sup> These appeals to Islam in mobilizing the Kashmiris against the Dogras were to have powerful parallels in the post-1947 period, when anti-India feelings were sought to be articulated by groups such as the JJK, India being identified as 'Hindu', and the threat to the Kashmiris as a threat to Islam itself. Even Sheikh 'Abdullah, fiercely nationalist Kashmiri that he was, was clever enough to realize the importance of religious symbols in his mobilizational appeals. Thus, it is not surprising that he attempted to use the Sufi shrines of Kashmir, including the one regarded as

<sup>26</sup> Riyaz Punjabi, 'Kashmir: The Bruised Identity', in Raju G. C. Thomas (ed.), *Perspectives on Kashmir: The Roots of Conflict in South Asia* (Westview Press, Boulder, 1992), p. 137.

most holy, the Hazratbal shrine in Srinagar housing a hair of the Prophet, as platforms to organize mass rallies and demonstrations. Yet, as Sheikh 'Abdullah began to develop close links with Congress leaders in India, differences began to develop within the Muslim Conference on the issue of religion. This was brought to a head in 1938, when the faction led by Sheikh 'Abdullah decided to name itself as the National Conference in an effort to bring non-Muslim Kashmiris into the struggle for a democratic Kashmir. The other faction, led by Choudhry Ghulam Abbas of Jammu, protested against this decision, and separated from 'Abdullah and his supporters, styling themselves as the Jammu and Kashmir Muslim Conference. By the mid-1940s, the National Conference, under 'Abdullah, the 'lion of Kashmir' (*sher-i-kashmir*), had emerged as by far the most popular movement in the Kashmir valley. It had, however, little influence in the areas where Muslims were a minority or in a slim majority, such as Ladakh and in some districts of Jammu. In 1946, the National Conference launched the Quit Kashmir movement, mobilizing mass support in an effort to put an end to Dogra rule in Kashmir. This movement failed to receive enthusiastic support from Muhammad 'Ali Jinnah and his Muslim League, whose Pakistan movement had, by this time, won a mass following among the Indian Muslims. Sheikh 'Abdullah now drew closer to the Congress, bitterly critiqued the 'two-nation theory' of the League, while leading a struggle for an independent, secular Kashmir. Although the National Conference now managed to rally most Kashmiri Muslims behind it, this did not mean that Islam had ceased to play an important role in their lives. Rather, their enthusiastic support of the National Conference and their cold reception by the League suggested that while firmly rooted in their Islamic traditions, they were fiercely opposed to what they saw as the possibility of 'alien' Muslim rule if they were to join Pakistan.<sup>27</sup>

### The Origins of the JJK

It was in this context of the growing political awakening in Kashmir and the emergence of Islamic reformist groups that the JJK took root. Its earliest leaders, almost all of them from middle-class families, many with Sufi connections, seem to have been greatly disillu-

<sup>27</sup> *Kashmir War*, pp. 37–8.

sioned with the course that Kashmiri Muslim politics was taking. Between the 'secular, composite nationalism' of the National Conference and the 'Muslim nationalism' of the Muslim Conference, they saw little to choose from. Instead, they believed, their hope lay in Islam, in the way it was being presented in the writings of Sayyed Abul 'Ala Maududi.

One of the earliest JJK activists, who was to lead the organization as its first *amir* for many years, was Sa'aduddin Tarabali. His early life provides important clues about the social composition of the JJK in the early 1940s and its attraction for sections of the emerging Kashmiri Muslim middle class. Sa'aduddin was born into a family with long Sufi connections, linked with the renowned Sufi mystic, Ahmad Sahib Tarabali of Srinagar. He was one of the few Kashmiri Muslims of his generation to have studied till the graduation level. He had also received a traditional Islamic education, earning the 'alim degree as well as being a *hafiz*, having memorized the entire Qur'an.<sup>28</sup> His association with the Jama'at-i-Islami began in his youth, when he came across Maududi's journal, the *Tarjuman al-Qur'an*. So impressed was he with Maududi's analysis of the Muslim situation in India in his *Musalman Aur Maujudah Siyasi Kashmash* ('Muslims And The Present Political Turmoil'),<sup>29</sup> published as a series in his journal, that he wrote a letter to him. Maududi wrote back, and this was the beginning of a long and close relationship between the two.<sup>30</sup>

After his graduation, Sa'aduddin worked for a while as a teacher at the Anjuman Nustrat-ul Islam's Islamiya High School in Srinagar. Later, he was appointed as head master of the government school at Chrar. Here, he began introducing Maududi's writings to a number of young Kashmiris. From Chrar, he was shifted to the government school at Shopian, where he taught science for a year. In Shopian, then a hub of Kashmiri politics, Sa'aduddin managed to bring many young Kashmiri men under his influence. One of the most prominent of these was Maulana Ghulam Ahmad Ahrar, an active member of

<sup>28</sup> 'Abdul Khaliq Hanif, *Hamari Muhajirat: Asbab-o-Alal* (Tulu Publications, Srinagar, 1998), p. 24.

<sup>29</sup> Maududi here argued against both the Congress' 'composite Indian nationalism' and the Muslim League's 'Indian Muslim nationalism', putting forward the case for Islam as a political ideology for the Indian Muslims.

<sup>30</sup> Ashiq Kashmiri, *Tarikh-i-Tahrik-i-Islami Jammu Aur Kashmir: Aghaz-i-Islam Se 1947 Tak* (Department of Publications and Publicity, Jama'at-i-Islami Jammu and Kashmir, Srinagar, n.d.), p. 277.

the Majlis-i-Ahrar, an Islamic reformist group, who was to go on to play an important role in the later establishment of the JJK.<sup>31</sup> Like Sa'aduddin, Maulana Ahrar also belonged to a family known for its Sufi connections. He received a traditional Islamic education, first at a seminary in Lahore, and then at the Madrasa Nusrat-ul Hasan at Amritsar, where he came into contact with Hakim Ghulam Nabi, who was to later become the first secretary-general of the JJK.<sup>32</sup>

As the number of Kashmiri Muslims influenced by Maududi gradually rose, thanks to the efforts of Sa'aduddin and Maulana Ahrar, a meeting of like-minded people was organized in 1942 at Badami Bagh, Shopian. This is regarded as the first, although unofficial, *ijtema* (gathering) of the Jama'at in Kashmir.<sup>33</sup> Soon after, Maududi called an *ijtema* of readers of his *Tarjuman al-Qur'an* at his Dar-ul Islam centre at Pathankot in order to discuss the agenda and working of the Islamic movement. Sa'aduddin was invited but could not attend it.<sup>34</sup> In 1945, the first all-India *ijtema* of the Jama'at-i-Islami was held at Pathankot, which Sa'aduddin and Maulana Ahrar attended, along with two other Kashmiris, Ghulam Rasul 'Abdullah and Qari Saifuddin, the latter a scion of a family of Sufi Pirs, who was later to go on to occupy various top posts in the JJK.<sup>35</sup>

Sa'aduddin's stay at Shopian was short-lived. After a year, he left to pursue further studies at the Prince of Wales College, Jammu, after which he was appointed as a teacher at the government middle school at Baramulla. Here, too, he cultivated a circle of young Kashmiri Muslims, to whom he introduced the writings of Maududi. From Baramulla, he was shifted to Srinagar, his home-town. Later, owing to his growing preoccupation with the affairs of the Jama'at, Sa'aduddin gave up his government job and devoted himself full-time to spreading the network of the organization. He is said to have led an extremely spartan life, donating all his spare money to the Jama'at, so much so that, according to one account, he did not have money to make a second suit for himself.<sup>36</sup>

Another of the early activists of the movement in Kashmir was Hakim Ghulam Nabi of Pulwama. He, too, was born in a Pir family.

<sup>31</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 293.

<sup>32</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 296.

<sup>33</sup> Afroz Ahmad Bisati, 'Religio-Political Role of the Jama'at-i-Islami in Jammu and Kashmir' (M.Phil. Thesis, Shah-i-Hamadan Institute of Islamic Studies, Kashmir University, Srinagar, 1997), p. 16.

<sup>34</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 302–3.

<sup>35</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 318.

<sup>36</sup> Hanif, *Hamari Muhajirat*, p. 26.

He received his early education in Delhi and then went to the famous reformist Islamic seminary at Deoband, the Dar-ul 'Ulum, where he enrolled for the *maulvi fazil* course. He later trained in Unani (Greek) medicine. He was known for his good knowledge of Arabic, Urdu and English, and was also a prolific writer. Under Maulana Ahrar's influence, he got involved with the JJK, and later rose to the positions of deputy *amir* and secretary-general of the organization.<sup>37</sup>

Perhaps the most well-known of these early Jama'at activists was Sayyed 'Ali Shah Gilani. He was born in 1929 at the village of Zurimanz, in the Bandipora *tehsil* of Baramulla district. Although his family were Sayyeds, descendants of the Prophet, Gilani's father was a poor manual labourer in the canals' department. Yet, he had great hopes for his son, whom he sent to the *madrasa* attached to the Masjid Wazir Khan in Lahore at the age of fourteen for a traditional Islamic education. From there, the young Gilani went on to enrol at the Oriental College, Delhi, where he came to develop an interest in the writings of Muhammad Iqbal. Later, he returned to Kashmir, where he became active in National Conference politics, being appointed as the secretary of the unit of the party in his ancestral village of Zurimanz. In 1946, at the height of the Quit Kashmir movement against the Dogras, he was introduced to one of the most senior leaders of the National Conference, Maulana Muhammad Sayeed Masudi by a left-leaning activist of the party, Muhammad Anwar Khan. Masudi, who had made the Mujahid Manzil in Srinagar his headquarters, was so impressed by Gilani that he appointed him as a reporter in the National Conference's organ *Akhbar-i-Khidmat*. The Maulana looked upon Gilani as his own son. In 1948, he arranged for Gilani to shift to Mujahid Manzil and stay with him. He arranged for his education, and with his help Gilani was able to complete the Urdu *adib-i-fazil* course, the *munshi fazil* course in Persian and a course in English. Thereafter, he was appointed first as a teacher at the primary school at Pathar Masjid in Srinagar, and then at the high school at Rainawari.<sup>38</sup>

In his spare time, Gilani would spend hours at Nur Muhammad's book shop at Maharaj Ganj. One day, Nur Muhammad lent him a book by Maududi, which, apparently, he found so absorbing that he stayed up the whole night reading it, and then read it two times over

<sup>37</sup> Ashiq Kashmiri, *Tarikh-Tahrik-Islami Jammu Aur Kashmir 1947-1970* (vol. 2) (Markazi Maktaba-i-Jama'at-i-Islami Jammu and Kashmir, Srinagar, 1984), pp. 26-7.

<sup>38</sup> Interview with Sayyed 'Ali Shah Gilani, Srinagar, 18 April, 1999.



again. Describing his feelings on reading the book, Gilani wrote, 'At an unconscious level I developed a strange love for the author, thinking how beautifully he had expressed the feelings that lay deep down in my own heart, and I wished I could get to read more of his writings'.<sup>39</sup>

Among the staff at the Rainawari school where Gilani was teaching, several had by then come into association with the Jama'at, including Qari Saifuddin, Ghulam Hasan Rizvi and Ghulam Nabi Andrabi. Gilani soon developed a close relationship with them, particularly with Qari Saifuddin, who introduced him to the other writings of Maududi. Soon, Gilani became a confirmed convert to Maududi's cause. Hardly having completed his twentieth year, Gilani was now active in the work of the Jama'at, attending meetings of its activists organized in people's homes.<sup>40</sup> He finally became a full-fledged member of the JJK in 1953.<sup>41</sup>

A common thread seems to run through the biographies of most of the early activists of the JJK, who later went on to become leaders of the movement. They all seem to have belonged to middle-class families, many with Pir backgrounds. Their standing as members of Pir families gave them a position of leadership and authority within their own local communities, in which the Pirs and their descendants were traditionally looked upon with considerable respect and reverence. Many of them had received a traditional Islamic education outside Kashmir, in places in Punjab, the United Provinces and Delhi, which introduced them at a young age to changing currents of Islamic expression. Clearly, being exposed to new Islamic trends, they were increasingly dissatisfied with the existing conditions of religious belief and practice in Kashmir, in a context where Sufism, the dominant form of Islam, had degenerated, for the most part, into rituals and un-Islamic beliefs associated with the cults of the saints. Their commitment to a sort of Islam that condemned the cults centred around the graves of Sufis can be read as a revolt against their own family traditions, seeing these, in some way, as responsible for Muslim marginalization and powerlessness. Their quest for a more socially and politically involved and activist Islam can be seen as part of the larger Kashmiri Muslim middle class-led struggle against, first, the Dogras, and then, after 1947, Indian rule. Islam,

<sup>39</sup> *Tarikh* (vol. 2), p. 29.

<sup>40</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 32.

<sup>41</sup> Interview with Sayyed 'Ali Shah Gilani, Srinagar, 18 April, 1999.



for them, was a call for political assertion in a context of perceived Muslim powerlessness, as well as a call for personal piety and dedication to God's Will.

This new breed of Kashmiri youth were equally dissatisfied with the secular, western-educated leaders of the Kashmiri struggle against the Dogras, people such as Sheikh 'Abdullah, who 'would capture the minds of the people by reciting the Qur'an, but who themselves did not follow its teachings in their own personal lives', as they were with the traditional '*ulama* and Sufis. As for the latter category, they were seen as 'ignorant of the need for *ijtihad*', the creative interpretation of Islam to meet the challenges of the changing times, challenges which the new generation of educated Kashmiri Muslims were increasingly having to come to terms with. Their expression of Islam was understood as being 'restricted just to the four walls of the mosque', and 'unable to prove itself in the wider world outside'. They were seen as politically passive, 'regarding the government as the shadow of God on earth', and, instead of 'mustering forces to combat falsehood', they were 'seeking to prove falsehood as the truth'. In addition, they 'lacked the inner strength and the wide vision' to carry forward Islam 'as a movement and revolution'. The young men who formed the core of the JJK leadership in its early years clearly had a different vision in mind.<sup>42</sup>

### The Early Years

As we have seen above, four Kashmiris attended the first all-India *ijtema* of the Jama'at-i-Islami at Pathankot in 1945. There it was decided that the Jama'at should begin organizing itself in a planned manner in Kashmir. Following this, three Srinagar-based Jama'at workers, Sa'aduddin, Qari Saifuddin and Muhammad Hussain Chishti, met to discuss plans for the expansion of the movement, and Sa'aduddin was chosen as the *amir* to lead the organization in the state, holding the post till his retirement in 1985.<sup>43</sup> The Jama'at now began holding regular weekly meetings at the Jami'a Masjid in the heart of Srinagar. Gradually, the numbers attending these meetings rose. Soon, a study centre was opened in a room provided by Sayyed Muhammad Nabi in Naya Bazar, where Islamic literature,

<sup>42</sup> *Tarikh* (vol. 2), pp. 170–1.

<sup>43</sup> Sarwat Jamal, *Qissa-i-Dard* (Mizan Publications, Srinagar, 1996), p. 47.

including Maududi's writings, were kept for reading and public distribution. From Srinagar, the work expanded to other parts of the Kashmir valley, with Qari Saifuddin and Ghulam Rasul 'Abdullah travelling extensively to spread the message of the Jama'at. Shortly after, in late 1945, the first large, organized *ijtema* was held in Srinagar, which was attended by between seventy and a hundred people from all parts of Kashmir, mainly government servants, but also including a fair number of youth and traders.<sup>44</sup> In his inaugural speech to the gathering, Sa'aduddin declared:

The aim of this *ijtema* is to present the invitation [*da'wat*] of Islam before the people of Kashmir. This is not a new invitation for them, because, much earlier, Hazrat Amir-i-Kabir<sup>45</sup> had spread the light of this message in this land, because of which darkness and the sin of associationism [*shirk*] had disappeared and almost all Kashmiris had become Muslims . . . However, our state today is such that, leave alone making an unbeliever a Muslim, no true Muslim can be fully satisfied with us. Our Sufi *shaykhs*, our venerable elders and our spiritual seekers are engrossed in their own world of illumination [*kashf*] and miracles [*karamat*], but the sad state of Islam in this land today is beyond all description. Is this not proof enough of the fact that today we are totally ignorant of the true spirit of Islam, that we have limited our understanding of Islam to a few limited rituals, that we have ignored Islam's universal scope, and, consequently, have presented it in such a way that today's revolutionary age is not willing to accept the Islamic revolution?<sup>46</sup>

Lamenting the sad state of Islam in Kashmir and inspiring his listeners to join the movement for its revival, Sa'aduddin added:

History tells us that Islam possesses such a system, because of whose truth and universalism the cultures and even languages of the most civilised countries of the world were abandoned by their people and they recognised the supremacy of Islam as their sole source of spiritual and worldly success. Today, when the world is in such a dangerous situation, when the very existence of the human race is threatened, when every community wants, at any cost, to impose its will and its self-made laws on the others or to enslave them, is it not appropriate that we should, once again, present before the world the broad Islamic revolutionary programme? Accepting this programme and acting upon it is the only way to destroy racial, national, territorial, social and economic differences at once, to completely eradicate slavery, for through this path one comes into the obedience and slavery of the One Supreme God. This programme, in reality, is the mission

<sup>44</sup> *Tarikh* (vol. 2), pp. 34–5.

<sup>45</sup> Mir Sayyid 'Ali Hamadani, also known as Amir-i-Kabir ['The Great Leader'] was a fourteenth-century Iranian Sufi who was one of the pioneers of Islam in Kashmir.

<sup>46</sup> *Tarikh* (vol. 2), pp. 35–6.

which all the prophets, from Adam [may Allah bless him!] down to the Holy Prophet Muhammad [may peace be upon him!] presented before humankind, and this, indeed, is the invitation that the Jama'at-i-Islami is today presenting before the whole world.<sup>47</sup>

### Growth and Consolidation: The Post-1947 Period

With the Partition of British India in August 1947, Maududi shifted from Pathankot in East Punjab to Lahore. Later, the same year, war broke out between India and Pakistan over Kashmir. Gilgit, Baltistan and Muzaffarabad were taken over by Pakistan, while the Kashmir valley, Ladakh and most of Jammu fell to Indian control. Jama'at activists in Kashmir, based primarily at Srinagar, seem to have ardently advocated the state's accession to Pakistan, but in the face of the National Conference and India's overwhelming military power, could do little. While most Kashmiri Muslims appear to have rallied behind Shaikh 'Abdullah, an influential and numerically not insignificant section continued to nurse the hope of their state being allowed to join Pakistan. This pro-Pakistan constituency was later to become a strong base of support for the JJK.

As increasing numbers of people, mostly educated, young students, traders and lower- and middle-ranking government employees began being attracted to the JJK at this time, the organization turned its attention to institutional development. The years 1947–52 saw the setting up of the first Jama'at schools, wherein secular disciplines and religious sciences were integrated, the launching of the party's newspaper, the Urdu *Azan* (1948), first as a monthly and then as a weekly, and expansion in propaganda work in mosques.<sup>48</sup>

Till 1952, the JJK was governed by the constitution of the Jama'at-i-Islami Hind, the Indian wing of the Jama'at, which, after the Partition in 1947, had been set up, separate from the Pakistani branch of the Jama'at, as an independent organization. However, owing to the disputed status of the state of Jammu and Kashmir, in 1952 the Jama'at-i-Islami Hind decided that the organization in the state should be separated from its Indian parent-body. As a result, the Jama'at-i-Islami of Jammu and Kashmir came into being. Shortly after, an *ad hoc* committee of JJK leaders was constituted to draft its own constitution, under the leadership of two of its stalwarts,

<sup>47</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 36–8.

<sup>48</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 38–41.

Maulana Ahrar and Ghulam Rasul 'Abdullah. Work on the constitution was completed in November 1953, and in that month, at a meeting of the members of the JJK, it was accepted and passed.<sup>49</sup>

In order to elect an *amir* for the new organization, a special meeting of the JJK was held at Barzalla, Srinagar, in October 1954. Sa'aduddin, who had led the spearheading of the Jama'at in the state all these years, was elected *amir* by a large majority. Two months later, the newly-formed Central Advisory Committee had its first meeting, in which Hafiz Muhiuddin was chosen as the JJK's secretary-general, while four district *amirs* were also appointed. Soon after this, Sa'aduddin gave up his post as a government school teacher, and despite the immense financial hardship that his family had to face as a result, devoted himself full-time to the work of the organization, being elected, once again, in 1956, as *amir*.<sup>50</sup>

One of Sa'aduddin's important concerns at this time was the spread of the JJK's activities in the Jammu province. Till now, work had been concentrated largely in the Kashmir valley, while the Muslims of Jammu had been neglected. This needed urgently to be redressed, particularly since in Jammu the Muslims, once forming the largest community in the province, had, after 1947, been reduced to a small and insecure minority,<sup>51</sup> who had, in the Partition riots, been badly affected, with thousands having been slaughtered by Hindu and Sikh mobs abetted by the Maharaja's forces, and many more having been forced to flee to neighbouring Pakistan.<sup>52</sup> The issue of extending the work of the JJK in the Jammu province was raised at the annual meeting of the Central Advisory Committee in 1957, and soon after, Maulana Ahrar was despatched as a representative to the area. He made an extensive tour of the province, noting the great destruction that the Muslims there had suffered in the Partition riots, and observed, to his dismay, that many of them 'had become Hinduised in terms of culture'. He warned his colleagues in Kashmir that if the Jammu Muslims were not immediately helped 'they might soon turn Hindu in matters of belief and faith as well'.

<sup>49</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 42.

<sup>50</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 46–7. He carried on in this post till 1985.

<sup>51</sup> Tahir Amin, *Mass Resistance in Kashmir: Origins, Evolution, Options* (Institute of Policy Studies, Islamabad, 1995), p. 27.

<sup>52</sup> According to one source, some 200,000 Muslims were slaughtered in Jammu and over 300,000 forced to flee to Pakistan in 1947. See, Altaf Hussain, *Shabbir Shah: A Living Legend in Kashmir History* (Noble Publishing House, Srinagar, n.d.), p. 4.

In his report he suggested that the only way in which their situation could be remedied was for Kashmiri Muslim government employees who shifted to Jammu in the winters to be mobilized to spread Islamic awareness among them. The Maulana pointed out that top-level Kashmiri Muslim government bureaucrats could not be expected to do this, for they had little interest in or enthusiasm for Islam themselves. Rather, he pinned his hopes on 'the lower class government employees who still have a great love for Islam in their hearts'.<sup>53</sup>

In the course of his three-month visit of the province of Jammu, including the Muslim-majority districts of Rajouri, Poonch and Doda, Maulana Ahrar discussed his plans with junior Kashmiri Muslim government servants and addressed public meetings at various mosques, where he also distributed literature published by the Jama'at. At one of these meetings, he put forward a five-point proposal to the local committee for administering Muslim endowments, the Anjuman Awqaf-i-Islami, requesting them to do away with the insecurities and fears that the Muslims of Jammu were facing; to undertake steps to spread education and Islamic consciousness among them; to set up Islamic schools in every Muslim-dominated locality, where the Imams of the mosques should teach Muslim children the Qur'an, their salaries being paid by the Awqaf board; to regularly inspect this work; and to appoint special missionaries to preach Islam among the Muslims living in outlying rural areas.<sup>54</sup>

The 1950s were, then, a period of considerable expansion of the JJK, in terms both of numbers as well as geographical reach. Many young Kashmiris, increasingly disillusioned with the autocratic ways of the ruling National Conference and what was seen as its selling Kashmir's interests to India, began enrolling as sympathizers and members. The arrest of Sheikh 'Abdullah in 1953 and his subsequent imprisonment for well over a decade for challenging the legitimacy of Indian rule in Kashmir, as well as India's consistent denial of democratic rights to the Kashmiris, drove growing numbers of Kashmiri youth to join or at least to sympathize with groups opposed to Indian control, the JJK being one of these. The JJK, it should be noted, has been one of the few political groups in Kashmir to have consistently maintained that the issue of Kashmir's political future is still to be resolved and that India's control over the territory

<sup>53</sup> *Tarikh* (vol. 2), p. 64.

<sup>54</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 64–78.

without seeking the will of the people of Kashmir is in complete violation of the UN resolutions on the subject. The JJK's commitment to Kashmir's accession to Pakistan won it the support of significant numbers of Kashmiris as opposition to India mounted, on account of India's refusal to abide by its promises to the Kashmiri people, the fear of the rising challenge of Hindu chauvinism in India, the perceived threats to the religious identity of the Kashmiri Muslims, the failure of the state to absorb the growing numbers of educated young men in jobs in the public sector, the almost complete absence of employment opportunities in the private sector, the continued hold of the Pandits at the top level of the administrative service and the repeated rigging of elections in order to have a pliable state government in power which would pander to New Delhi's wishes.<sup>55</sup> It would, however, not do to attribute the growing popularity of the JJK at this time simply to its role as an oppositional force. Equally important for many was its programme of Islamization of society and its advocacy of personal piety alongside social transformation in the direction of establishing what it called an Islamic system.

Although the JJK may not have been able to carve a large following for itself among the *'ulama*, many of whom, being associated with various Sufi orders or with the Deoband school, remained opposed to it, it did appeal to sections among a new class of Kashmiri Muslims, educated in modern schools that had begun to come up in Kashmir after 1948. These were young men, typically from lower-middle class families in towns such as Srinagar, Baramulla and Sopore, disillusioned with what they saw as the 'world-renouncing' and un-Islamic popular Sufism of the shrines, seeking a form of Islamic expression that would satisfy their need for religious and cultural authenticity, while at the same time being in tune with the demands that modernity placed on them and answering their need for political assertion and community activism. They were often the first generation of educated members of their families, products of the sweeping reforms that Sheikh 'Abdullah had introduced in his short spell as Prime Minister of the state before the Indian authorities arrested him in 1953. These reforms had broken the power of the Hindu landlord class in Kashmir, transferred land to the tillers of the soil and had opened up hitherto closed avenues of upward social mobility

<sup>55</sup> Balraj Puri, *Kashmir Towards Insurgency* (Orient Longman, New Delhi, 1993), p. 29.

for many Kashmiri Muslims through a rapid expansion of the educational system and the public sector.<sup>56</sup> The JJK, with its abundant literature, its opposition to 'un-Islamic' features of popular Sufism, its forceful advocacy of modern as well as Islamic education through a network of schools that it began to set up, and its commitment to community work and political assertion, readily appealed to sections of this new generation. Education in the expanding government school and college system had widened their horizons, while, at the same time raising their expectations of worldly advancement. With the failure of the state to provide employment opportunities commensurate with the growing numbers of educated youth, many of them began turning to overtly anti-Indian parties, including to the JJK, fiercely opposed as it was to Indian rule.

For many Kashmiris, the JJK seemed to offer a form of Islamic expression and commitment in sharp contrast to what was seen as the world-renouncing popular Sufism associated with the shrines, which came to be increasingly seen as un-Islamic and as responsible, among other factors, for Muslim decline. The JJK appeared as a movement that not only sought to rescue the Kashmiris from their un-Islamic ways, taking them back to pristine Islam, but also enabling them to cope with contemporary challenges. The JJK sought not only to promote religious consciousness, but also attempted to address issues of immediate, this-worldly concern to people most affected by them. Thus, in a long list of issues that the JJK took up for public debate by organizing rallies in various parts of the state, a JJK spokesman mentioned the following: the protection and enforcement of Muslim Personal Law; unity of all Muslims; the growing spread of the use of alcohol; increasing corruption in the state administration; the interference of the ruling party in the functioning of the state bureaucracy; the hoarding of essential commodities; the agitation in Jammu launched by Hindu militants to fully integrate Kashmir with India; the resettlement of Muslims affected by violence in parts of the state; providing fertilizers to farmers; the issue of Kashmir's disputed status; the indiscriminate arrest of students; proper rules for the police and a raise in their salaries; employment to Kashmiri Muslim youth in Arab states; expanding employment opportunities in the state; maintaining the minority

<sup>56</sup> In 1950, soon after coming to power as Prime Minister, Sheikh 'Abdullah introduced two new laws to abolish large landed estates and to assist cultivators in debt. All cultivable lands above a 23 acre limit were seized from the landlords and given to the landless or converted into State property.

character of the Aligarh Muslim University; violence against Muslims in India; provision of clean drinking water to towns; proper health care; and police attacks on protesters.<sup>57</sup> The JJK also sought to render practical help to people in need, such as providing relief to victims of natural disasters and legal assistance.<sup>58</sup> These were issues of direct concern to people as they sought to manage their daily lives. Custodians of Sufi shrines, in contrast, would rarely, if ever, devote their attention to these 'worldly' matters. It is, then, not surprising that growing numbers of educated Kashmiri youth found themselves veering round to the JJK, if not to actually enrol as members but at least to sympathize with its cause, disenchanted with both the traditional Sufis as well as with the state.

Despite its gradual growth from the 1950s onwards, the JJK had to contend with considerable resistance from several quarters within the Kashmiri Muslim community. Many Muslims associated with the popular Sufi traditions saw it as part of a wider 'Wahhabi'<sup>59</sup> nexus. Its message of Islamic reform, with its insistence that Muslims should go directly to the Qur'an and the *sunnah* of the Prophet for guidance, by-passing the authority of the Sufi saints and denying the intermediary powers that were attributed to them, was seen as an attack on cherished beliefs by practitioners of the cults that had developed around the graves of the Sufis. It was also felt to be a threat to the authority of the custodians of the shrines, the class of Pirs, who commanded great respect among the ordinary folk. Allegations were levelled against the JJK by what it called 'monopolists of religion', of promoting 'wrong beliefs' (*bad ayteqadi*) and of 'denying the Sufis' (*auliya-i-allah ke munkar*).<sup>60</sup> Others accused it of being 'deniers of the Prophetic traditions' (*munkar-i-hadith*), 'obscurantist' (*qadamat pasand*), 'communalist' (*firqa parast*), 'anti-national' (*mulk dushman*) and even of being agents of the CIA.<sup>61</sup> Opposition from these quarters to the work of JJK activists was reported from many places. Thus, in August 1957, local Muslims protested against a JJK *ijtema* at the village of Dengi Vich in Baramulla, at which Sa'aduddin was present. Sa'aduddin tried to reason with the protesters, saying,

<sup>57</sup> Qari Saifuddin, *Vadi-i-Purkhar* (Markazi Maktaba-i-Jama'at-i-Islami Jammu and Kashmir, Srinagar, 1980), pp. 62–4.

<sup>58</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 100.

<sup>59</sup> The term refers to the eighteenth-century reform movement of Muhammad ibn Abdul Wahhab of Najd, aimed at combating what he saw as the un-Islamic practices of the Muslims of his time.

<sup>60</sup> *Tarikh* (vol. 2), p. 78.

<sup>61</sup> Saifuddin, *Vadi-i-Purkhar*, p. 9.



We are your brothers. We believe in Allah, His Prophet and the Hereafter, and we only talk about these matters with the people . . . You must understand that the communists might soon come here, and they do not believe in Allah, His Prophet, the Qur'an and the Hereafter. Your brave *maulvis* will probably themselves welcome them with garlands of flowers.<sup>62</sup>

Even the reformist Ahl-i-Hadith group, which shared a common legacy of Islamic reform with the JJK, but which competed with it for much the same potential support-base, did not spare the Jama'at from attack, probably fearing, like the custodians of the Sufi shrines, that the Jama'at was succeeding in winning over a number of its own potential supporters. For instance, in December 1952 local Ahl-i-Hadith activists in Shopian started a virulent campaign against the JJK, telling the people that,

The Maududi *jama'at* have adopted the appearance of Muslims but, in actual fact, they are so far from Islam that the prayers said behind an Imam who belongs to that sect are unacceptable [to God] . . . In short, they are even worse than the Mirzais,<sup>63</sup> Qadianis and Bahais, and so they should be completely avoided.<sup>64</sup>

The Jama'at, however, responded to these allegations with tact. It saw many of its critics as simply motivated by a threat to their own interests because of its increasing influence. Qari Saifuddin noted that some 'selfish *mullahs*, for whom religion is a means for livelihood' were opposing the party for their own petty reasons. The JJK's political opponents were branding it as anti-Sufi, he said, simply in order to malign its image, fearful of its growing popularity. The Jama'at, unlike the Ahl-i-Hadith, it may be noted, advocated a non-confrontationist and relatively moderate stance *vis-à-vis* the Sufis. Its approach in 'nullifying *shirk* and advocating *tauhid*', notes a sympathetic observer, was 'one of tactical compromise'.<sup>65</sup> Rather than directly opposing the veneration of the tombs of the saints as un-Islamic, the JJK sought, in some cases, to operate from within existing Sufi frameworks in order to present what it saw as the true monotheistic teachings of the Sufis, which had, over the centuries, been covered with layers of superstition. Thus, for instance, Qari Saifuddin was himself chairman of the famous Sufi shrine at Khanyar, Srinagar,

<sup>62</sup> *Tarikh* (vol. 2), pp. 91–2.

<sup>63</sup> Followers of the nineteenth-century Mirza Ahmad Qadiani of Punjab, who claimed himself to be a Prophet. They are also known by their detractors as Qadianis.

<sup>64</sup> *Tarikh* (vol. 2), pp. 84–5.

<sup>65</sup> Bisati, 'Religio-Political Role', p. 40.

for seven years and translated the sayings of the fourteenth-century Hazrat Nuruddin Nurani, founder of the Muslim Rishi order and considered to be the patron saint of Kashmir, from Kashmiri into Urdu. The JJK organ *Azan* also regularly brought out special issues on various Sufi saints of Kashmir who had played an important role in the spread of Islam in the region.<sup>66</sup> Likewise, Sa'aduddin translated Mir Sayyed Ali Hamadani's Persian *Aurad-i-Fatahiyya*<sup>67</sup> into Urdu, and penned numerous tracts, attempting to re-interpret Sufi practices and concepts in a manner that reflected the JJK's concern with proper observance of the *shari'ah*. Thus, for instance, in a pamphlet on Sufi litanies, he critiqued the empty ritualism that had become associated with the performance, arguing that the recitation of the litanies needed to be 'accompanied by deep thinking', which, in turn, would 'change our conditions swiftly from bad to good'. This, however, he added, 'needs the understanding of the Qur'an and Hadith'. Reciting litanies in praise of God must also be accompanied by action aimed at implementing God's Will on earth, including the struggle to establish a truly Islamic social order.<sup>68</sup> In another pamphlet, Sa'aduddin sharply rebuked those who simply chanted the litany *allah-o-akbar* ('God is Great'), without acting upon 'the responsibility that the command lays on them'. God's greatness means that His Will alone should be obeyed 'in every branch of our life', and this, in turn, means that the society and the state should be patterned on God's law, the *shari'ah*.<sup>69</sup>

The JJK's attitude to the cults of the Sufi shrines, although certainly moderate as compared to the Ahl-i-Hadith, did not seem to have made for its popular acceptance. While sections of the Kashmiri Muslim middle class could readily identify with the Jama'at's message of reform, tied in as it was with an activist spirit for political assertion, it proved incapable of reaching out to vast numbers of ordinary Kashmiris, in whose lives the cults centred around the shrines of the saints continued to play a pivotal role. Charges of being 'anti-Sufi' and a hidden 'Wahhabi plot' were not easily rebutted.

<sup>66</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 39.

<sup>67</sup> A litany in praise of God and the Prophet recited in almost all the mosques of Kashmir after the *fajr* and *'isha* prayers.

<sup>68</sup> Sa'aduddin, *The Term Subhan Allah* (Ideal Publishing Academy, Srinagar, n.d.), p. 7.

<sup>69</sup> Sa'aduddin, *Allah-u-Akbar: An Explanation* (Jama'at-i-Islami Jammu and Kashmir, Srinagar, n.d.), pp. 2–6.

From the early 1950s onwards, its involvement in the field of educational provision and in electoral politics were the principal means, besides its abundant literature, regular symposia and seminars and mass rallies, that the JJK employed in order to win supporters and influence Kashmiri public opinion. Funds were generated from donations, from fees paid by members and from properties that members and sympathizers endowed to the organization (*awqaf*). By the turn of the 1970s, the JJK had emerged as a powerful force to reckon with, with a large number of active members spread out all over the state, particularly in the Kashmir valley. In 1979, it was noted that the JJK had managed to set up six district offices in the Kashmir province. In Srinagar district it had 44 'circles', consisting of 95 members (*irkan*) with 23 more, including a woman, having applied for membership. In addition it had 700 close 'sympathizers' (*hamdardan*) and an estimated 6000 'supporters' (*mutafiqin*). In the course of the previous six years it had been able to reach some 50 new villages with its message.<sup>70</sup> Because of its large size, the JJK divided Baramulla district into two parts for the sake of administrative convenience. In Baramulla [A], it had 65 members, 199 'close sympathizers', and 525 'supporters', including 76 women; 57 new villages had been reached in the last six years. In Baramulla [B], the JJK had 800 'close sympathizers' and some 700 'supporters'. In Islamabad [Anantnag], where the JJK was particularly strong, there were 70 'circles', with 224 members, 7730 male and 1221 female 'close sympathizers' and 21,700 male and 3500 female 'supporters'. In the previous six years the JJK had reached 106 new villages in the district.<sup>71</sup> The JJK's relatively strong presence in Islamabad [Anantnag] is particularly significant in that the district has the highest literacy rate in the Kashmir valley, pointing to the ready appeal of the JJK among sections of the educated petite bourgeoisie in small towns. On the other hand, the relatively weak presence of the JJK in Srinagar, the state's largest city, has been explained as owing principally to the city being the centre for the traditional Sufi leadership of the Kashmiri Muslims based at its several large *khanqahs* and *dargahs*.<sup>72</sup>

<sup>70</sup> Saifuddin, *Vadi-i-Purkhar*, p. 51.

<sup>71</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 52–3.

<sup>72</sup> Khwaja Abdus Samad wani, 'Kashmir Ki Siyasi Jama'aten: Ek Ta'aruf', in Safir Akhtar, *Kashmir: Azadi Ki Jad-o-Jehad* (Institute of Policy Studies, Islamabad, 1990), p. 97.

The JJK seems to have fared far less successfully in the two other regions of the state, Jammu and Ladakh, where Muslims, although a minority, lived in large numbers. Thus, in 1979, the JJK had only twelve 'circles' in Jammu, less than the number in any of the six districts in Kashmir. It could count only 46 members in the Jammu province, 37 others having applied for membership. In Ladakh, including the Shi'a majority Kargil district, it had no circles at all and no local members. Some Kashmiri Muslim government servants posted in the area were, however, sympathizers of the JJK, and they were reported to have made efforts to spread the organization's message by holding public meetings and distributing literature.<sup>73</sup> In effect, therefore, despite its efforts at appealing to Muslims in all parts of the state and from the various ethnic groups, the JJK remained a largely Kashmiri Muslim organization.

### Educational Policy

The JJK, like its counterparts in India and Pakistan, has its main base among literate, lower-middle and middle-class Muslims. Its principal tool of propagating its message is its abundant literature, a mode of communication that readily appeals to this class, while at the same time limiting its access to peasants and workers, who, for the most part, still retain their loyalties to the popular Sufi traditions associated with the Sufi shrines. The rapid expansion of the educational system from 1950 onwards through the mushrooming of state and private schools worked to the benefit of the JJK, for the spread of literacy provided it with a means to put across its message more effectively. Furthermore, the rapid expansion in educational provision in the state, coupled with the much slower, indeed negligible, growth of employment opportunities, created a growing class of educated, unemployed youth, disillusioned with India, potential recruits to groups that forcefully challenged the legitimacy of Indian rule in Kashmir, such as the JJK. Literacy rates in Jammu and Kashmir rose dramatically in the years after the end of Dogra rule. In 1941 it was estimated that only 1.6% of the Kashmiri Muslim population could read and write.<sup>74</sup> In contrast, two decades later, the literacy

<sup>73</sup> Saifuddin, *Vadi-i-Purkhar*, p. 53.

<sup>74</sup> Onkar Razdan, *The Trauma of Kashmir: The Untold Reality* (Vikas Publishing House, New Delhi, 1999), p. xviii.

rate for the state rose to 11.03% in 1961 and then to 36.29% in 1981. In 1965 only 46 newspapers were published in Kashmir, while the corresponding figure in 1991 was 254.<sup>75</sup> Taking advantage of the spread of literacy in the state, the JJK focused much of its energies in attempting to reach out to a literate audience through publishing books and tracts in Urdu, bringing out its regular organ *Azan*, first as a daily and then as a weekly, and by distributing books published by the Markazi Maktaba-i-Islami, the publishing house of the Jama'at-i-Islami of India.

Under its first *amir*, Sa'aduddin, himself a teacher, the JJK, from its very inception, understood the importance of influencing popular opinion, especially of the youth, through the educational system. The JJK was one of the earliest non-governmental organizations in Kashmir to enter the sphere of educational provision in a big way. Testifying to the success and wide appeal of the JJK's educational schemes, Bhat writes that the JJK has 'made tremendous contributions in the field of education in Jammu and Kashmir'.<sup>76</sup> One of the principal means that the JJK used to spread its influence was its growing network of schools. Recognizing the growing urge among the Kashmiri Muslim middle class for educating their children and their low enthusiasm for the poor quality government school system, the JJK set about establishing a number of educational institutions, some of them of fairly good standard, in which modern disciplines as well as basic Islamic subjects were taught. The JJK saw the influence of the Indian educational system as threatening the Islamic culture of Kashmir, as a result of which, in its opinion, many young Kashmiri Muslims had begun to lose their Islamic moorings, and hence felt the urgent need for a network of schools of its own.<sup>77</sup> According to a Pakistani sympathizer of the JJK, the JJK's network of schools was intended as a bulwark against an 'Indian onslaught in the cultural sphere'. The schools, he says, were set up in order to lead to 'a silent revolution', to keep alive the memory of Kashmiri independence and of India's forcible occupation of the state.<sup>78</sup> It was widely believed in JJK circles that a carefully planned Indian conspiracy was at work to destroy the Islamic identity of the Kashmiris, through Hinduizing

<sup>75</sup> Cited in Sumit Ganguly, *The Crisis in Kashmir: Portents of War, Hopes of Peace* (Foundation Books, New Delhi, 1997), pp. 32–4.

<sup>76</sup> Khwaja Sanaullah Bhat, *Kashmir Testament* (translated by Altaf Hussain Tak) (Bright Publications, Delhi, 1998), p. 8.

<sup>77</sup> *Tarikh* (vol. 2), p. 100.

<sup>78</sup> Amin, *Mass Resistance*, p. 84.

the school syllabus and spreading immorality and vice among the youth. It was alleged that the government of India had despatched a team to Andalusia headed by the Kashmiri Pandit D. P. Dhar, to investigate how Islam was driven out of Spain and to suggest measures as to how the Spanish experiment could be repeated in Kashmir, too. Faced with what it saw as these menacing threats, the JJK felt the compelling need for a comprehensive educational system of its own to save the Kashmiri Muslim youth from Indian 'cultural imperialism'.<sup>79</sup>

In addition, the JJK also felt that it was only through the spread of education and literacy that its message could reach out to the general public, for published literature was its principal means of communication. As the official historian of the JJK puts it, 'in order for the people to understand the message of the Islamic movement, it was felt that knowledge and education are indispensable . . . because only the educated younger generation can control the reigns of not just the Muslim community but of humanity as a whole'.<sup>80</sup> Hence, one of the first steps that it took, even before it separated from the Jama'at-i-Islami Hind, was to establish a number of alternate educational institutions. The first such school was set up at Nawab Bazar in the heart of Srinagar, where the Jama'at's headquarters were then located. It had, to begin with, just five students and one teacher.<sup>81</sup> Text-books developed by the Jama'at-i-Islami Hind were used in the classes. From the first standard itself, the students were taught Arabic, English, Urdu, Mathematics and Islamic Studies, and their performance was, apparently, so good that, 'Parents now started priding themselves in the fact that their children were studying not in Christian mission schools but in a school run by the Jama'at'.<sup>82</sup>

Gradually, the number of JJK schools increased, with units being set up in various parts of Kashmir. Local people joined in the work, often even helping to set up the school buildings with their own money. According to a JJK source, people now started demanding that there should be at least one Jama'at school in every locality, although this dream could not be realized owing to shortage of quali-

<sup>79</sup> Alifuddin Turabi, 'Tehrik-i-Azadi-i-Kashmir: Ta'alimi Idaron, Asatizah Aur Talaba Tanzimon Ka Kirdar', in Safir Akhtar (ed.), *Kashmir: Azadi Ki Jad-o-Jehad*, p. 66.

<sup>80</sup> *Tarikh* (vol. 2), p. 101.

<sup>81</sup> Bisati, 'Religio-Political Role', p. 26.

<sup>82</sup> *Tarikh* (vol. 2), pp. 100–1.

fied staff. Instead, efforts were made to set up one such school in every 'important place'. In places where it proved difficult to establish regular day schools, the JJK started night classes. The expenses for the schools, including teachers' salaries, were met entirely from the fees collected from the students. Although the teachers were not well-paid, their enthusiasm for the cause for which they were working kept them going, and, it is said, as a result, 'the students of the Jama'at's schools turned out to be, generally, more intelligent than those in government and Christian schools'. Even some non-Muslim parents, impressed by the high moral standards of these schools, enrolled their children in them rather than send them to government or other schools.<sup>83</sup>

Over time, many of the primary schools that the JJK set up grew into middle and higher schools. Separate schools were set up for boys and girls. The girls were taught broadly the same mix of modern and Islamic disciplines as the boys, although they were also made to study Home Science. All the teachers at the girls' schools were women. The students at the JJK schools, notes one source, were constantly reminded 'of the separate communal identity of the Muslims, the Islamic identity of the state of Jammu and Kashmir and its disputed status'. In addition, they were 'inspired to work for the victory of Islam, jihad in the path of Allah, freedom and self-determination of the Kashmiri people'. In this manner, these schools were working to bring about 'a silent revolution', many of those who were to go on to play a leading role in militant politics in the 1990s having been products of these schools.<sup>84</sup> To streamline its rapidly expanding educational system, the JJK set up the Islamic Educational and Research Centre at Soura in Srinagar, on a plot of land donated to it by one of its members.<sup>85</sup> The JJK made several representations to the state government to recognize its schools, but the latter repeatedly turned down these requests, apparently because of the ruling National Conference's hostility towards the Jama'at, although educational officers had commended their high standards.<sup>86</sup>

Clearly, as the rapid expansion of the Jama'at's schools in Kashmir from the early 1950s suggests, through its provision of formal education, the JJK was responding to an important felt need of the Kashmiri Muslim middle classes, as well as building up a cadre of youth

<sup>83</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 101–2.

<sup>84</sup> Turabi, 'Tehrik-i-Azadi-i-Kashmir', p. 71.

<sup>85</sup> Saifuddin, *Vadi-i-Purkhar*, p. 80.

<sup>86</sup> *Tarikh* (vol. 2), pp. 103–4.

who were expected to go on to carry on the work of the organization in the years to come. By 1975, the Jama'at had succeeded in preparing its own text-books for the schools, now no longer having to depend on books written by others. However, in that year, the government of India under Indira Gandhi imposed a state of Emergency in the entire country. Among the many organizations to be banned were the Jama'at-i-Islami Hind and the JJK. As a result of the ban, the 125 schools of the JJK, with over 550 teachers and 25,000 students, were forcibly closed down, being accused of allegedly spreading communal hatred, a charge that JJK leaders strongly denied.<sup>87</sup> In addition, the estimated 1000 evening schools of the JJK, in which some 50,000 girls and boys received education, were also banned.<sup>88</sup> Top JJK leaders were thrown into jail, in an effort, according to the Jama'at's official historian, to 'stop the Jama'at's message of human awakening and its mission of bringing about a cultural revolution among the Muslims'.<sup>89</sup>

With the lifting of the Emergency in 1977, the JJK decided to put the administration of its schools under the control of a separate body, formally independent of it. Thus, it set up the Falah-i-'Am Trust to co-ordinate the functioning of its schools, prepare their syllabi and appoint their teachers.<sup>90</sup> To carry its message to a wider audience, it also now began setting up a number of study circles and libraries in various parts of the state. In 1979 it was reported that the JJK was operating almost two hundred study circles and libraries, with a total stock of books estimated to be above 30,000.<sup>91</sup> Besides, each activist of the JJK had his own stock of books, which were lent out to others. Gradually, through these means, the JJK managed to establish a firm presence for itself among lecturers and students in colleges in the Kashmir valley. In order to galvanize work among the growing Kashmiri Muslim intelligentsia, it set up the Islami Jami'at-i-Tulaba ('The Islamic Union of Students') in 1977 to provide a space for students associated with the JJK to be involved in the affairs of the organization and to co-ordinate preaching and mobilization work among the wider student community. Of particu-

<sup>87</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 313.

<sup>88</sup> Turabi, 'Tehrik-i-Azadi-i-Kashmir', p. 72.

<sup>89</sup> *Tarikh* (vol. 2), p. 106.

<sup>90</sup> Saifuddin, *Vadi-i-Purkhar*, p. 14.

<sup>91</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 65. The district-wise composition of the study centres and libraries was as follows: Islamabad (Anantnag): 99, Baramulla [A]: 18; Baramulla [B]: 42; Srinagar: 40.



lar concern for Jami'at leaders was what was seen as the growing Westernization of the Kashmiri youth, and it sought to combat this with appeals to Islam.<sup>92</sup> Under its first president, Shaikh Tajammul Hussain, the Jami'at launched a students' agitation in 1979, inspired by the role of students in the Iranian revolution, demanding compulsory Islamic education for Muslim students of government schools in Kashmir, which the state refused to consider. Later that year, the Jami'at organized a large and well-attended convention in Srinagar, in which delegates from Islamic movements from other Muslim countries also participated. In seeking to link up with Islamic students' movements in the rest of the Muslim world, the Jami'at applied for and was granted membership of the Riyadh-based World Association of Muslim Youth (WAMY) and its associate, the International Islamic Federation of Students' Organisations (IIFSO) in 1979.<sup>93</sup> The next year, the JJK, along with the Jami'at, organized a large international conference in Srinagar on the occasion of the advent of the 15th century of the Islamic calendar. Scores of important foreign delegates, including the Imam of the holy shrines at Makkah and Madinah, Shaikh 'Abdullah bin Sabil, the *muezzin* of the Prophet's mosque at Madinah, Shaikh Qari Khalil, and top government officials from the United Arab Emirates, Kuwait and Iran attended. The speakers called for the need to generate greater Islamic consciousness among the Muslims of the world, to cement the bonds of universal Muslim brotherhood and to struggle against what they called as conspiracies against Islam launched by 'enemies of the faith'.<sup>94</sup> For the JJK and the Jami'at, this seminar, particularly the presence of such key persons from abroad, was important in seeking to establish their claims to represent Islam in the face of other competing groups, such as the custodians of the Sufi shrines. These links with Islamic leaders in Arabia and Iran, along with fraternal ties with Arab-based international Islamic organizations, later proved decisive in shaping the minds of young JJK activists in the direction of a *shari'at*-based universalistic Islam divorced from its local manifestations and forms. They also facilitated the entry of ideas of 'revolution' and 'struggle' against 'anti-Islamic' forces, which

<sup>92</sup> For a Kashmiri Muslim perspective on the issue, see Mudassira Rasul Panzu, *Kashmir Mai Maghribiyat Ke Badhte Sayen* (Idara Da'awat-ul Qur'an wa Sunnah Jammu and Kashmir, Srinagar, 1996).

<sup>93</sup> Birbal Nath, *Kashmir: The Nuclear Flashpoint* (Manas Publications, New Delhi, 1998), p. 91.

<sup>94</sup> *Tarikh* (vol. 2), pp. 353–5.

were later to exercise a crucial influence on the moulding of the JJK as the younger element entered the higher levels of the party over time. Indeed, the progressive radicalization of the JJK itself over time, culminating in its embracing the militant option in 1990, cannot be seen apart from the inter-generational struggle within the organization, as younger activists began to exercise a growing influence in its affairs.

The young men associated with the Jami'at later went on to occupy leading positions in the JJK as well as in the militant organization that it was to be associated with, with the launch of the armed struggle in Kashmir in the late 1980s, the Hizb-ul Mujahidin. As early as 1980, at a time when the JJK was still formally committed to 'peaceful' methods as laid down in its constitution, there was evidence of talk in Jami'at circles of taking to militant means to liberate Kashmir from Indian rule. Addressing a press conference at Srinagar in August that year, the president of the Jami'at declared the Indian forces stationed in Kashmir to be an 'army of occupation', stressing that the Kashmiris did not consider themselves Indian. He said that the Jami'at would work to 'create conditions' for an Islamic Revolution as in Iran, calling for the establishment of an Islamic state (*nizam-i-mustafa*).<sup>95</sup> In 1981, the Jami'at chief was reported to have appealed to the Kashmiri youth to 'throw out' the Indian 'occupiers' and to establish Islamic rule in the state.<sup>96</sup> Such appeals may not have directly translated themselves into more numerical support for the Jami'at, but they did help galvanize a deeply-held sense of grievance and growing opposition to Indian rule, to the advantage of forces opposed to Indian control, including the JJK.

In addition to direct work with students, the JJK made efforts to reach out to sectors which, it recognized, it had a weak support base among, including women, non-Muslims and the peasantry. For this purpose, public rallies were organized in various parts of the state. These did not, however, seem to evoke the enthusiastic response that the JJK hoped they would. By and large, the peasantry remained immersed in their popular Sufi traditions. As for the non-Muslims, the JJK sought to appeal to them through its literature, but admitted that 'so far no work worth mentioning' had been done. Throughout, the JJK remained solidly a male bastion, although some atten-

<sup>95</sup> Sati Sahni, *Kashmir Underground* (Har-Anand Publications, New Delhi, 1999), p.

24.

<sup>96</sup> Nath, *Kashmir*, p. 135.

tion seems to have been devoted to bringing women into the movement. Thus, a 1980 publication of the JJK, while admitting that among women in Srinagar it had not been able to make much headway, mentioned that it had achieved some success at other places. In Baramulla, it noted, ten special lectures for women were delivered every year and a group of women 'sympathizers' (*hamdardan*) had been organized there. Greater success was recorded in the Islamabad (Anantnag) district, where 49 lectures were organized for women that year, and from where one woman had enrolled as a full-fledged member of the JJK.<sup>97</sup>

### Political Involvement

The 1975–77 Emergency was not the first time that the JJK had come under attack from the Indian authorities, and nor was it to be the last. Throughout the 1960s, the JJK had come into conflict with the Indian state for questioning the legality of Indian control over Jammu and Kashmir, insisting that the matter be resolved through a plebiscite in accordance with the numerous resolutions passed by the United Nations on the issue. Matters came to a head in late December 1963, when a holy relic, the *mo-i-muqaddas*, a hair believed to have belonged to the Prophet Muhammad, was stolen from its repository at the shrine of Hazratbal in Srinagar. In its wake, mass demonstrations rocked the entire Kashmir valley, and soon the movement for the recovery of the relic developed into a popular agitation for freedom and political self-determination for the people of the state. Muslim religious groups, including the JJK, seem to have been among the most active in leading the agitation. 'The incident of the missing relic', says Maheshwari, 'brought back the Mullahs, after about five decades, to the centre-stage of politics'.<sup>98</sup> Several people were killed in police firing. Kashmiri political leaders set up the Awami Action Committee to carry on the struggle and to put forward their demands, in which the JJK was represented by Qari Saifuddin. The Indian state responded by arresting these leaders, including the Qari. Meanwhile, spearheading the agitation for the recovery of the holy relic, and linking it to a broader struggle for

<sup>97</sup> Saifuddin, *Vadi-i-Purkhar*, pp. 65–6.

<sup>98</sup> Anil Maheshwari, *Crescent Over Kashmir: Politics of Mullahism* (Rupa, New Delhi, 1993), p. 4.

political self-determination, senior JJK leaders toured the Kashmir valley to mobilize public support, demanding that the matter of the missing relic be urgently taken up in the UN Security Council and that the UN despatch a team to investigate the whole affair. Apparently, taking advantage of the extremely disturbed conditions in Kashmir, some elements sought to create Hindu–Muslim tensions in the region, but the JJK ‘prevented the masses from turning their attention to rioting’.<sup>99</sup> Although the missing relic was soon recovered, the mass movement generated in the wake of its loss had made it abundantly clear that India had lost the sympathy of most Kashmiri Muslims. A widespread feeling of anti-Muslim discrimination, the rapid encroachments on Kashmir’s autonomy and India’s refusal to abide by its promises to the Kashmiri people to let them decide their own political future, coupled with dictatorial rule, administrative corruption, mounting unemployment and poverty in the state,<sup>100</sup> in addition to India’s inept handling of the *mo-i-muqaddas* crisis, all combined to generate a pervasive resentment and hostility against Indian rule. ‘By the end of 1963’, Lamb writes, ‘the majority of foreign observers of the Kashmir scene had little doubt that a plebiscite treating the whole State of Jammu and Kashmir as a single voting unit would lead to a clear call for the transfer of the entire State from India to Pakistan’.<sup>101</sup> Groups that had consistently advocated Kashmir’s accession to Pakistan, one of the most influential of which was the JJK, clearly gained the most from the fall-out of the *mo-i-muqaddas* affair. In addition to its religious appeals, the JJK’s strong stand on the political status of Kashmir and its forceful challenging of the legitimacy of Indian control was now winning for it increasing support among growing sections of Kashmiri Muslims.

Although the JJK missed no opportunity of raising the issue of the disputed status of Jammu and Kashmir and questioning the legitimacy of Indian control, it displayed a surprisingly flexible behaviour in the matter of participating in elections held under the framework of the Indian Constitution. This could be seen as a tactical compromise, as a means of using available democratic spaces for spreading its message and influence and preparing for a gradual take-over of the governmental apparatus. As early as 1963, the JJK fielded some of

<sup>99</sup> *Tarikh* (vol. 2), pp. 123–34.

<sup>100</sup> Hari Om, *Beyond the Kashmir Valley* (Har-Anand Publications, New Delhi, 1998), p. 147.

<sup>101</sup> Alastair Lamb, *Kashmir: A Disputed Legacy 1846–1990* (Oxford University Press, Karachi, 1993), p. 210.

its members as independent candidates in the local-level (*panchayati*) elections, in order, it said in justification, to 'acquaint the people with the guidance of Islam in political affairs'.<sup>102</sup> Likewise, in the 1969 *panchayati* elections, which were held on a non-party basis, the JJK sponsored several candidates from among its members, some of whom were elected. The JJK came in for sharp rebuke for this from certain quarters. Its critics advised it 'restrict itself to the character-building of children in schools and to keep Allah's sovereignty within the four walls of the mosque through lectures and instilling fear of the Hereafter'. Fearful of the challenge that the JJK might pose to them in the political domain, they warned it, so a top JJK ideologue writes, 'not to attempt to struggle to establish God's rule in the world and impose His laws'.<sup>103</sup> The JJK rebutted its critics, saying that it was not a 'mere reformist club' but that it had 'a programme for a complete life, which extended not just to social and educational affairs but also to the seat of government', stressing that 'politics cannot be separated from Islam'. It argued that it was using the opportunity provided by the elections to get its members into places of power, so that from there they could more effectively spread the message of the mission it was working for,<sup>104</sup> and 'through legal means, ensure the election of pious and God-fearing people as trustees of the public'.<sup>105</sup> It also justified its participation in the elections as a means to urge the Indian government to solve the Kashmir dispute.<sup>106</sup> Qari Saifuddin, the JJK secretary-general, defended the JJK's role in the elections, saying that, 'If through constitutional and democratic means it is possible to bring about any sort of reform in the system of governance, the Jama'at-i-Islami cannot ignore them'. He argued that the elections had provided the JJK with a unique opportunity 'to serve the people' and to 'put before them the Islamic alternative', insisting that the JJK's intention had not been to garner seats.<sup>107</sup> The JJK's organ *Azan* declared that the organization's involvement in the elections had been simply to see that pious Muslims committed to the Islamic cause came to positions of power. It alleged that both the Congress as well as the Plebiscite Front, the

<sup>102</sup> Saifuddin, *Vadi-i-Purkhar*, p. 10.

<sup>103</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>104</sup> *Tarikh* (vol. 2), pp. 201–2.

<sup>105</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 335.

<sup>106</sup> Sayyed 'Ali Shah Gilani, *Millat-i-Mazlum* (Tulu Publishers, Srinagar, 1998), p.

10.

<sup>107</sup> *Tarikh* (vol. 2), p. 206.

main opposition party, were raking up an unnecessary controversy over the matter because they found that with the JJK's entry into electoral politics, the ground was slipping from under their feet.<sup>108</sup> The emergence of the JJK as a serious contender and oppositional force in the realm of electoral politics indicated that growing alienation of the average Kashmiri from National Conference and its increasingly autocratic ways, along with what was seen as its connivance with the Indian state to water down considerably the internal autonomy of Kashmir, could well translate itself into support for an Islamist alternative.<sup>109</sup>

In 1971, the JJK participated in the general elections, and although it expected to win some seats, it failed to get any, amidst charges of widespread electoral malpractices. Later, the Central Advisory Committee of the JJK decided that the party would contest the 1972 elections to the State Assembly. It viewed these elections as providing it with the first opportunity to 'challenge before the people the Western notion of the separation between religion and politics'.<sup>110</sup> It saw its participation in the elections as crucial in demonstrating before the public that 'politics is part of religion, and that it is not forbidden in religion, as some Muslim scholars with little understanding believe, or as some atheists insist in order that religion may be separated from its source of life'. On the contrary, it insisted that it wanted to see 'religion as a living reality' and that it was struggling to have 'the exaltation of the same witness to the truth (*shahadat-i-haq*) inside the chambers of law as it was striving for in the world outside'.<sup>111</sup> Accordingly, it decided to field candidates for all the seats in the State Assembly, but later, owing to financial and other constraints, chose to contest only 22. The more prominent of its candidates included Sayyed 'Ali Gilani from Baramulla, Hakim Ghulam Nabi from Islamabad (Anantnag), 'Abdur Rashid Islahi from Doda and Qari Saifuddin from Srinagar. Although it expected to perform well, it failed to gain as many seats as it had hoped because of massive rigging. After the elections, the JJK complained that several government employees sympathetic to it were harassed, with show cause notices being sent to some, while others were suspended from service.

<sup>108</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 311.

<sup>109</sup> Ramesh Khazanchi, 'Kashmir: Soft Sufi to Radical Islam', *Times of India*, 19 December 1998.

<sup>110</sup> *Tarikh* (vol. 2), p. 248.

<sup>111</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 252.

On the whole, however, the JJK saw its participation in the elections as a gain for the Islamic movement, because it was able, in the course of its election campaign, to present its message to a far wider audience than ever before, and 'breaking the inertia of the last twenty years, it showed the people the value of the vote', and, in this way, 'prepared new ground for the struggle'. Furthermore, the elections had also helped the JJK prepare a large group of what it described as 'trained, fearless and brave activists', who were to stand it in good stead in the future.<sup>112</sup> In addition, the successful JJK candidates played an active role inside the State Assembly, 'challenging or even staging a walk-out if the government took any wrong step' and stiffly opposing un-Islamic proposed laws, such as proposals to allow free availability of alcohol and legalize abortion.<sup>113</sup> In the debates in the Assembly on matters of education and the framing of laws, its members argued the superiority of Islamic alternatives.<sup>114</sup> Inside the Assembly, its members repeatedly raised the question of the disputed status of Jammu and Kashmir, asserting that India had failed to abide by its promises to the UN to hold a plebiscite in the territory.<sup>115</sup>

In 1975, Sheikh Abdullah entered into an agreement with Indira Gandhi, being released from years of imprisonment and installed as Chief Minister of Jammu and Kashmir, and thereby accepting the accession of the state to India. The JJK strongly condemned the Indira–Abdullah accord, arguing that this was a gross violation of the UN resolutions which India had accepted, under which the final settlement of the status of Kashmir could be only made through a plebiscite involving all the people of the State. It argued that India had no right, according to international law, to seek to bury the issue of the disputed status of Kashmir by signing a pact with a single individual. Instead, it said, the only solution to the issue was to take into account the wishes of the people of the State. Indeed, it argued, that was the only way that lasting peace between India and Pakistan could be established.<sup>116</sup>

Faced with a growing threat to her own power, Indira Gandhi declared a state of emergency in India in 1975. As a result, the JJK

<sup>112</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 249.

<sup>113</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 253.

<sup>114</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 337–9.

<sup>115</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 336. For texts of various UN Security Council resolutions on Kashmir, see *The Kashmir Resistance Movement: United Nations Resolutions and India's Commitments on Kashmir* (World Kashmir Freedom Movement, London, n.d.).

<sup>116</sup> *Tarikh* (vol. 2), pp. 280–4.

was declared a banned organization. Its offices were sealed, its leaders thrown into prison and a large number of its schools forcibly closed down, on the grounds of allegedly 'spreading communal hatred', a charge that JJK vehemently denied.<sup>117</sup> Even while in jail, JJK leaders are said to have carried on with their mission of *da'wat* (preaching), organizing lectures and even working among jailed activists of the right-wing and militantly anti-Muslim Hindu Rashtriya Swayamsevak Sangh ('Union of National Volunteers'), in the process, a JJK ideologue claims, 'removing their misconceptions about Islam and the Jama'at'.<sup>118</sup> The ban on the JJK was lifted two years later, when, in 1977, the Janata Party came to power in India and the state of Emergency was lifted. Following this, the JJK once again galvanized its efforts, holding large public meetings all over the State, bringing increasing numbers of people under its influence.<sup>119</sup>

The 1970s were a period of consolidation and gradual growth for the JJK's political strength and influence. The organization seems, however, to have suffered a temporary set-back in 1979, when, in April that year, General Zia-ul Haq captured power in Pakistan and hanged Prime Minister Zulfiqar Ali Bhutto. It was widely believed that behind Bhutto's assassination was the hand of the Jama'at-i-Islami of Pakistan. In the wake of Bhutto's hanging, massive agitations against Zia were witnessed all over Kashmir, and JJK offices and houses of its members were made special targets of attack. The JJK discerned a communist hand in this, arguing that the leftists, wary of its growing strength, were using Bhutto's assassination as a means to discredit it in the eyes of the Kashmiris. It also saw the involvement of what it called 'some so-called religious leaders' and 'mullahs peddling in religion (*din farosh mullah*)'<sup>120</sup> in these attacks, who were 'out to spread a reign of hatred and revenge' against the Jama'at. 'Ulama fiercely opposed to the JJK were accused of having instigated 'the innocent masses' to attack the JJK, using this as a pretext to stave off its challenge to their authority. As a leading JJK ideologue, Qari Saifuddin, put it:

Respectable *maulvis* (*maulviyan-i-karam*) issued *fatawa* declaring that the day of the Battle of Badr<sup>121</sup> had once again arrived, and that the day was one

<sup>117</sup> Saifuddin, *Vadi-i-Purkhar*, p. 13.

<sup>118</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 15.

<sup>119</sup> *Tarikh* (vol. 2), p. 317.

<sup>120</sup> Saifuddin, *Vadi-i-Purkhar*, p. 22.

<sup>121</sup> The first battle between the Muslims, led by the Prophet, and the Quraish of Makkah, fought in 2 A.H.



of victory for Islam. And, [they declared]: 'Just as in the field of Badr the property of the enemies was considered as the spoils of war (*mal-i-ganimat*), so, too, the property of the followers of Maududi is permissible (*halal*) to you. This is not looting and plundering. *Jihad*, this is, *jihad*'.<sup>122</sup>

It was estimated that in the three days of rioting, property worth some 400 million rupees belonging to the JJK and its members had been destroyed or looted.<sup>123</sup>

Recovering from the temporary set-back that it had faced in 1979, the JJK fielded several candidates in the 1983 State Assembly elections, but, owing to massive rigging, failed to win even a single of the 26 seats it contested. The 1980s witnessed the emergence of stirrings of protest in Kashmir, which, in a few years, were to take the form of a full-blown independence struggle. Indian despotism, the lack of internal democracy, the rigging of successive elections and a mounting economic crisis, coupled with the growing power of the aggressively anti-Muslim Hindu right in India, led increasing numbers of Kashmiris into overtly anti-Indian forms of protest. The Islamic Revolution in Iran in 1979, the armed struggle of the Sikhs in Punjab against the Indian state and the Afghan resistance against the Soviets seem to have developed into powerful sources of inspiration for large sections of the Kashmiri Muslim youth in their struggle for freedom from Indian rule. The state authorities responded with brutal force to even ordinary economic demands, which were construed as acts of treachery. Thus, for instance, a demonstration in 1988 in Srinagar against a sudden hike in power tariffs was fired upon by the police, in which several protesters were killed. Such incidents were projected by pro-independence groups as proof of India's unremitting hostility towards the Kashmiris. The fast emerging anti-India sentiments were sought to be mobilized both by the pro-independence JKLF as well as pro-Pakistan Islamist groups such as the JJK, which was later to result in serious internecine clashes between the respective armed groups patronized by them in the course of the struggle against the Indian forces.

It is striking to note, in this regard, that although the JJK had consistently argued that the issue of the political status of Kashmir was still in dispute and pending a final resolution, it insisted, right till the late 1980s, on the eve of the launching of the armed struggle by the JKLF, that the dispute be solved through negotiations, not through armed conflict.<sup>124</sup> Thus, in a speech to the 1979 annual con-

<sup>122</sup> Saifuddin, *Vadi-i-Purkhar*, p. 28.

<sup>123</sup> *Tarikh* (vol. 2), p. 328.

<sup>124</sup> Thus, the JJK Constitution, as amended in 1985, stressed that it would employ only 'peaceful means' to spread its message (*Constitution*, p. 9).

gregation of the JJK at Srinagar, the party's general-secretary, Qari Saifuddin, declared that the JJK 'has always desired that the Kashmir issue should be resolved through constitutional means and dialogue (*ā'ini aur shurā'i tariqe*)' and, accordingly, had been 'presenting the matter before the people and the government' through newspaper releases and its own literature.<sup>125</sup> In 1980, the Indian Supreme court handed down a decision sentencing Maqbul Butt, leader of the JKLF, to death for his alleged role in a crime committed in 1966. Large demonstrations took to the streets in towns of Kashmir in protest against the decision, and Butt emerged in the eyes of most Kashmiris as an unchallengeable hero. Yet, even then, the JJK counselled restraint. At a meeting held by the People's League in Srinagar to save Butt's life and allow him to defend himself, JJK leaders in attendance, while insisting that Butt should indeed be allowed to defend himself, asserted that they were 'bound by their constitution' and that they, therefore, believed that 'every step must be done in a democratic way (*jamhuri andaz*)', 'resolving issues' through 'democratic means (*jamhuri tariqe*)'.<sup>126</sup> In 1984, when Butt was finally hanged, the *Azan*, the JJK's official organ came out with a curiously worded statement, expressing both admiration for his dedication yet censure of the violent means that he had adopted in his effort to liberate Kashmir. Thus, the *Azan* commented that Butt, whom it referred to simply by his name without adding the customary suffix of *shahid* ('martyr'), was:

[A] Kashmiri youth who had begun the journey of life with great zeal. He had entered that world of emotions, where a person like him, burdened by the overwhelming force of emotion (*galba-i-hal*), carries on without making any distinction between the bitterness and sweetness of life, losing the capacity to distinguish between wrong and right. [Consequently, such a person] becomes indifferent to those results of his actions that cause the spirit of an ordinary person to shudder. Maqbul Butt was a bolt of lightning who, at the start of his life itself, put an end to the movement of his existence. His hanging has caused sorrow to the hearts of even those who do not accept destruction (*garatgari*) and extremism (*tashaddud*) as a means to solve differences<sup>127</sup> . . . Be that as it may, [we are] greatly saddened by the death of those youngsters who, despite having being so capable, become victims of their emotions, instead of facing the massive boulders in their path with determination and courage. In any case, this is to announce, with great

<sup>125</sup> Saifuddin, *Vadi-i-Purkhar*, p. 62.

<sup>126</sup> *Tarikh* (vol. 2), p. 359.

<sup>127</sup> Possibly a reference here to the JJK itself.

sorrow, that the flame of Maqbul Butt's life was finally extinguished by his hanging on 11 February at 7 o'clock.<sup>128</sup>

The hanging of Maqbul Butt galvanized large numbers of Kashmiri youth to participate in widespread anti-India demonstrations. The Indian state responded to these with ferocious force, and the stage was now set for the launching of an armed struggle for Kashmir's liberation. Public sympathy and support for the JKLF and its goal of an independent Kashmir now spread like a massive, uncontrollable wave.<sup>129</sup> In 1986, a group of JKLF activists crossed over into Pakistan, received armed training, and returned to Kashmir to declare war on the Indian forces, thus launching the armed struggle. The Kashmiris, tired as they were with years of Indian repression and the consistent denial of genuine democracy, responded enthusiastically. Yet even at this point, the JJK did not come out in open support of the JKLF and the mass movement it was leading, seeing its Kashmiri nationalism as a contradiction of Islamic universalism, and its goal of an independent Kashmir as challenging the JJK's consistent advocacy of Kashmir's accession with Pakistan. Thus as late as in 1986, Sayyed 'Ali Gilani, a top JJK leader, who was to become one of the most ardent advocates of the armed revolt in Kashmir, wrote:

In my opinion the only principle that can be adopted on the matter is to consider as a foundation the conditional accession [of Kashmir to India] in 1947 [*1947 mai kiye gaye mashrut ilhaq ko buniyad tasawwur karke*], and demand that all conditions laid down by the UN resolutions on the matter be fulfilled. On this basis, we need to educate the people, and to attain this [i.e. the right to self-determination] we should launch an organised (*munazzam*) and peaceful (*puraman*) struggle.<sup>130</sup>

One can only suppose that even at this juncture, when stirrings of armed revolt were already visible on the horizon, the JJK still believed that dialogue was the only way to solve the vexed issue of Kashmir, concerned as it probably was to avoid further repression from the Indian state. Four years later, the JJK, like many other Kashmiri political groups, turned its back completely on peaceful

<sup>128</sup> Cited in *Tarikh* (vol. 2), pp. 359–60.

<sup>129</sup> For a cogent presentation of the JKLF position on Kashmiri independence, see Amanullah Khan. *Nazariya-i-Khud Mukhtar Kashmir* (Jammu and Kashmir Liberation Front, The Hague, n.d.).

<sup>130</sup> Sayyed 'Ali Gilani, *Ek Pahlu Yah Bhi Hai Kashmir Ki Tasweer Ka* (Mizan Publications, Srinagar, 1986), p. 13.

dialogue, advocating an armed struggle against India, which it termed a *jihad* between Islam and disbelief (*kufir*).<sup>131</sup> The mounting Indian repression in Kashmir was one, indeed the major, factor for this turn-about, but equally important was the realization that if it did not join in the struggle, it would be marginalized by the sweeping popularity of the JKLF and other pro-independence Kashmiri nationalist groups. The subsequent assistance provided to Islamist groups, the JJK included, by Pakistan helped in the gradual displacement of the JKLF by the Islamists in the armed struggle as it played itself out over the years. Scores of JKLF men were killed by the Indian forces as well as by rival pro-Pakistan groups, and Pakistani armed support for the Kashmiri nationalists soon dried up, being diverted, instead, to pro-Pakistan Islamist organizations. Thus it came to be that by 1995, the JKLF as an armed group was no longer a force to seriously reckon with, although its agenda for a free, independent Kashmir still fired the hearts of many, if not most, Kashmiris. Pakistani support ensured that Islamist groups advocating Kashmir's merger with Pakistan gained the upper hand, at least at the military level, a fact that still holds today.

The actual launching of the armed struggle in Kashmir is dated to 1989, following close on the heels of the massively-rigged elections to the state assembly, held in 1987. This was to be the last time that the JJK participated in any elections in Kashmir, which it did as part of the Muslim Muttahida Mahaz (Muslim United Front), a conglomeration of several pro-independence groups, fighting the elections on the platform of establishing the rule of the Qur'an and the *sunnah* of the Prophet Muhammad, the Nizam-i-Mustafa.<sup>132</sup> It is widely believed that the Front was poised to win a large number of seats owing to widespread public disillusionment with and anger against Indian authoritarian rule.<sup>133</sup> However, these elections, too, were massively rigged, like all those preceding it, in order to instal a government pliable to India, leading to mass protests in the state. In 1989 the four members of the Front in the assembly<sup>134</sup> resigned,

<sup>131</sup> Yoginder Sikand, 'For Islam and Kashmir: The Prison Diaries of Sayyed 'Ali Gilani of the Jama'at-i-Islami of Jammu and Kashmir', *Journal of Muslim Minority Affairs*, vol. 18, no. 2, 1998, pp. 2413-45.

<sup>132</sup> Abdur Rashid Tarabi, 'Tehrik-i-Azadi-i-Kashmir: Ravan Marhale ke Pas-i-Manzar', in Safir Akhtar (ed.), *Kashmir: Azadi ki Jad-o-Jehad* (Institute of Policy Studies, Islamabad, 1990), p. 58.

<sup>133</sup> Sarwat Jamal, *Qissa-i-Dard* (Mizan Publications, Srinagar, 1996), p. i.

<sup>134</sup> Sayyed Ali Gilani [Sopore], Haji Abdur Razak Mir [Kulgam], Muhammad Saeed Shah [Anantnag/Islamabad] and Haji Ghulam Nabi Sumji [Humshali Bug].

as violence erupted throughout the Kashmir valley. For the Kashmiri Muslims, this had proved to them what they saw as the irredeemable hypocrisy and hollowness of Indian democracy. Just as in Algeria and Turkey in recent years, where the refusal of ruling regimes to make way for oppositional, including Islamist, forces victorious in elections to occupy the seats of power had resulted in bloody protests that degenerated into seemingly endless rounds of violence, so, too, the rigging of the 1987 elections in Kashmir by the Indian state set off a series of protests which then transformed itself into a full-blown war. No longer could the politics of accommodation work, for now the rupture was complete. The movement for the rights and identity of the Kashmir Muslims now took on the form of an armed struggle, in which the JJK, banned in 1990,<sup>135</sup> came to be crucially involved, and which, more than a decade later, still shows no sign of abating. But that is another story.

### Conclusion and Summary

We have attempted to trace here the historical development of the JJK from the early 1940s until 1989, when the popular uprising against Indian rule gave birth to an armed struggle in the course of which, to date, some 60,000 Kashmiris have lost their lives. We have seen that the origins of the JJK must be located in the growing urge in the early decades of the twentieth century among the Kashmiri Muslims for democratic freedoms, economic and social emancipation and assertion of their identity, in the context of the oppressive Dogra rule. The social support base of the early cadre of the JJK indicates a strong lower-middle class presence, of young Kashmiri Muslims with a new-found access to education and to Islamic reformist impulses emanating from Muslim quarters in other parts of India, most notably Delhi, Punjab and the United Provinces. Clearly, these young men were disillusioned with both the secular Kashmiri nationalism of the National Conference variety and the Muslim nationalism of the Muslim Conference. They saw their salvation, and that of their people, as lying in Islam alone, an Islam cleansed of the trappings of centuries of the local cults and superstitions associated with

<sup>135</sup> Under the Government of Jammu and Kashmir Home Department Notification of 16 April 1990, the JJK was officially banned on the grounds of allegedly encouraging 'unlawful activities'. For full details of the ban order, see Sahni, *Kashmir Underground*, p. 486.

what was seen as un-Islamic, 'world-renouncing' popular Sufism, an activist and politically assertive expression of the religion that they could relate to in the rapidly changing circumstances of the modern world. With its advocacy of a universalistic vision of Islam coupled with its enthusiasm for modern education, the JJK promised them both, a pristine Islam as well as a form of religion that could cope with the demands of modernity and help facilitate their entry into modern structures.

The later expansion of the JJK, in the period after 1947, had as much to do with its own mobilizational efforts, particularly through its chain of schools, libraries and publishing houses, along with its championing of issues of every-day concern to ordinary people, as it had with growing popular disenchantment with the National Conference and Congress and their inability to bring about any radical transformation in the lives of most Kashmiris. India's consistent refusal to act on its promises to let the Kashmiris decide their own political future, its denial of genuine democracy in the state, the continued domination by the Kashmiri Pandit minority at various levels of the local administration, the increasingly menacing face of Hindu chauvinism in India, coupled with growing unemployment among educated youth in Kashmir, all combined to produce a situation wherein appeals to Islamic solidarity and authenticity fell on increasingly receptive ears. Another principal source of the JJK's strength has been its consistent stand on the question of the political status of the state of Jammu and Kashmir, insisting that the issue needs to be resolved in accordance with the wishes of the people of the state themselves. In this it reflects, undoubtedly, the views of the vast majority of the Kashmiri people. Its ardent advocacy of Kashmir's accession to Pakistan has attracted to it significant numbers of Kashmiri Muslims whose sympathies lie with Pakistan, as opposed to India. As disillusionment with Indian rule grew over the years, others, too, began increasingly veering round to anti-Indian groups, whether pro-independence or pro-Pakistan, including the JJK. Sympathy and support for the JJK, therefore, cannot simply be accounted for in terms of religious sentiment or commitment alone, for the JJK's political stance on the Kashmir issue has also been a major factor for its ready appeal to many.

By the late 1980s, the JJK had developed a secure base among significant sections of the Kashmiri middle classes. Its largely middle class core-base meant, however, that it failed to emerge as a mass movement. This seems to be related to the own methods of working

that it had adopted. Its very tightly-knit, hierarchical organizational structure was not geared to mass mobilization. The primary means of communicating its message—the written word—effectively meant that most Kashmiris remained outside its sphere of influence. Further, its reformist message, with its indirect critique of the cults of the saints, which continue to play a pivotal role in the lives of most ordinary Kashmiris, exposed it to the charge of being ‘anti-Sufi’ and a ‘Wahhabi’ front, allegations which it had constantly to attempt to deny. Yet, steadily, as literacy spread and as the Kashmiri Muslims were exposed to new trends in Islamic thinking from outside, the ‘enchanted world’ of popular Sufism gradually began giving way before organized Islamic reformist efforts, as represented by groups such as the JJK.

The JJK's involvement in the on-going armed struggle in Kashmir, dating back to 1989/90, has proved to be of great import for its future role in the region, a mixed blessing for its fortunes. On the one hand, as the pro-independence and nationalist Jammu and Kashmir Liberation Front gradually lost control of the armed struggle, being sidelined by Islamist groups, the JJK has come to play a far more crucial role in Kashmiri political affairs than ever before. On the other hand, participation in the armed struggle has cost the JJK heavily, losing hundreds, if not thousands, of its leaders, cadres and sympathizers, in battles with and illegal killings by the Indian forces, bringing to a firm halt its efforts at preaching and disseminating its message through the schools and presses on which it had relied so heavily in earlier years.<sup>136</sup> As a consequence, JJK leaders are now calling for political means to be explored to solve the Kashmir dispute, and the Hizb-ul Mujahidin, the powerful armed group said to be associated with it, has openly come out in favour of a tripartite dialogue between India, Pakistan and representatives of the Kashmiri people.<sup>137</sup> Clearly, the hapless people of Kashmir, victims of a seemingly never-ending war, long for peace, but it appears that powers far beyond their reach seem to dictate their fate.

<sup>136</sup> Sayyed 'Ali Shah Gilani, *Nava-i-Hurriyat* (Mizan Publications, Srinagar, 1995), p. 69.

<sup>137</sup> See my, *Islam and the Kashmiri Struggle: The Writings of Sayyed 'Ali Shah Gilani* (published privately), Bangalore, 2000, p. 19.

