

The Human Rights Commission Srinagar

Kashmir

Bleeds



INSTITUTE OF POLICY STUDIES

FREEDOM FOR ALL FREEDOM FOR KASHMIR

**World Kashmir:
Freedom Movement
U.K.**

KASHMIR BLEEDS

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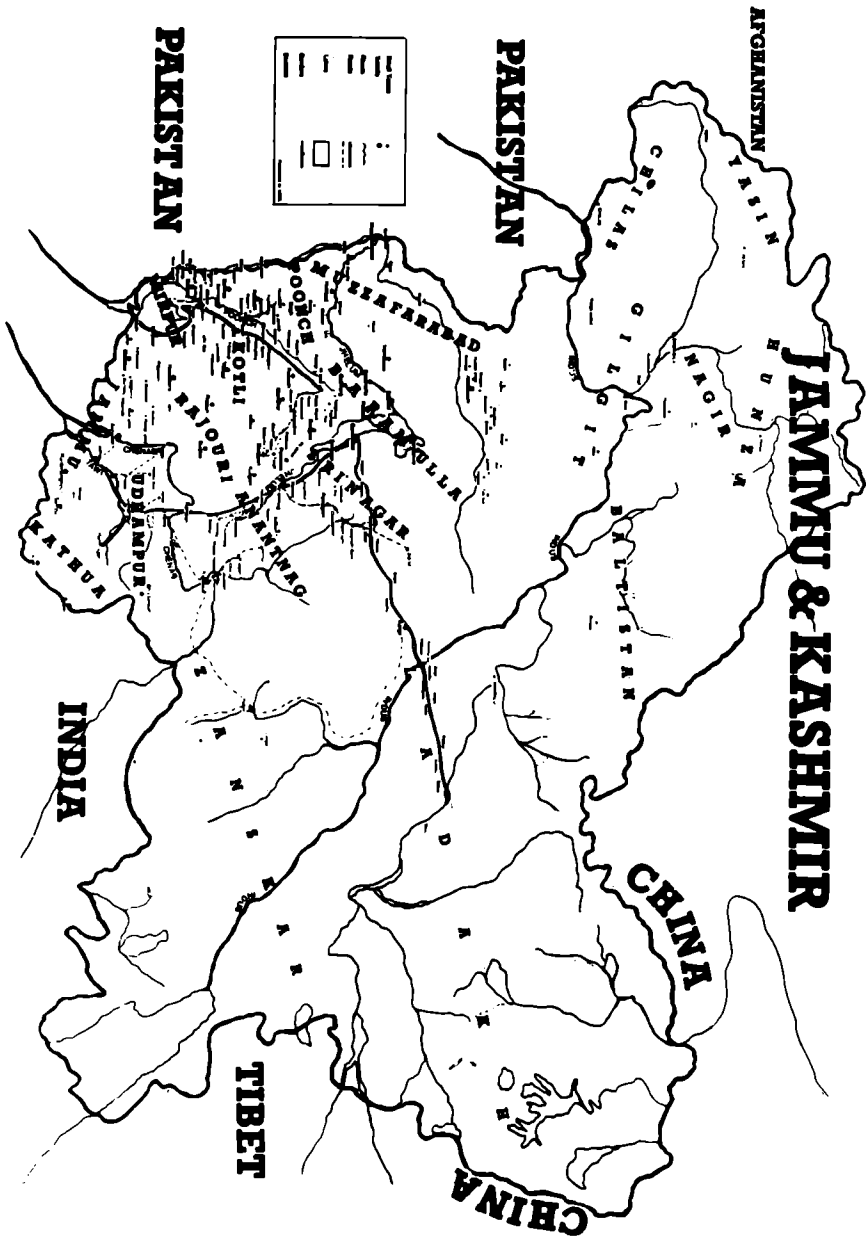
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**"Such is Kashmir: the country, which may be
conquered by the forces of spiritual love but not
by the armed forces."**

Rajatarangini or the River of Kings

By Pandit Kalhana (12th Century A.D.)
Verses: 39-42, Tarangal
Sahitya Akademi, New Delhi, 1968, p-12

JAMMU & KASHMIR



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Foreword

Kashmir Bleeds is a compilation of unadulterated press reports on the human rights situation in the Indian held Kashmir. Any prefatory statement therefore would be redundant. What, however, makes it compelling to read is its human dimension. Besides, the reports come from sources other than Pakistan-mostly Western and Indian. The former never concealed its bias for India, while the latter is the known victimizer in the Kashmiri saga of suffering.

After reading it, one is struck by the irony: India who tyrannizes over the scene in Kashmir still carries around its democratic, secular face without any fear of reproach from the world at large. The UN resolutions lie buried in the archives of the United Nations headquarters in New York. And those who brought together the war machine of twenty-eight countries to butcher a Third-World nation for its occupation of Kuwait have turned deaf toward the cries of the innocent in Kashmir. The more the Kashmir issue is ignored, the, more it will expose the hypocrisy of those who are engineering the alleged 'New World Order'.

Without justice nothing will endure. If the *Kashmir Bleeds* helps in awakening the world conscious of the need for justice for the people of Kashmir, it would serve its purpose. Gross and wanton violation of human rights must be stopped and stopped without delay. The right of self determination of the 12 million people of the state of Jammu and Kashmir must be respected and steps taken to hold an impartial plebiscite under international auspices to implement the U.N. Resolutions on Kashmir. This is the only way to ensure a peaceful solution to the problem.

Kashmir Bleeds has been compiled by the Human Rights Commission, Srinagar, Kashmir, India. Its compilers are retired

senior officers of the Indian Federal Service (IFS). It contains articles, comments and reports by leading Indian writers, journalists, social workers and human rights activists. That a compilation like this may lack on the counts of coherence and suffer repetition is more than compensated by the fact that it comes from persons who can not be accused of bias in favour of Pakistan, or even the people of Kashmir. It contains an indictment that comes from most of them whose loyalty is to India and all that it stands for. This is an evidence of truth that comes from the horses mouth. It deserves to be taken more than seriously.

Institute of Policy Studies.

Preface

In today's context human rights are synonymous with the day to day lives of the people. These are the people, who have been victims of blatant social injustice, deprivations in socioeconomic terms and man--made discriminations on religious basis, etc. Needless to say, that all these disparities have been imposed upon humanity by the vested interests as and when it suited them. This is all the more true in the case of people of Kashmir Valley.

Unprecedented, brutal and inhuman repression against the majority community, in the Valley have been order of the day in the recent past. The security forces, who have been given unbridled wide powers, have been brutalized as a force. Sordid details of hair raising atrocities cannot be mentioned in this short piece. Continuous indignities have been inflicted upon the women of the valley and the young men in particular have been made targets of state terrorism. There have been many unaccounted deaths of the youth in police custody. There have also been unlisted and physically tortured cases of youth in prisons, inside and outside the state. No one is sure of their numbers.

At the top of it innumerable residential houses and shops in small towns and suburbs have been burnt down. Such torching of premises is a loss which cannot be retrieved because of their being of wooden structures. The cost of wood for construction purposes or for any other requirement is already prohibitive. Under the pretext of house to house searches women are subjected to intolerable humiliations and even old men are not spared from being shot dead. The young, of course, get rounded up and God knows where they are taken.

My contention continues to be that it is this type of state terrorism, which gives rise to individual and group terrorism not

only in Kashmir, but also in certain other parts of the country [India] as well. It is not only this, but also our government has been offering opportunities on platter to the government of neighboring country to intervene. Such are the consequences of atrocities against the people, and not the causes of group terrorism or what is called as 'foreign intervention'. It may also be mentioned that the people of our neighboring country and the people of our own country have always been friendly towards each other. These are the governments, who have always followed policies of hostility and of belligerence towards each other.

Not to let the people of two neighboring countries live in peace by the governments is another well calculated blow on their (people's) fundamental rights.

In the Kashmir Valley in particular, the perpetual corruption ridden establishment has been consistently and deliberately communalizing the local politics. In this connection the two governors imposed by the New Delhi on the State of J&K, during the current period have been particularly marked for such ignoble roles. This has been yet another attack on the human rights of the people, through the heads of the administration.

Last but not the least, the deliberate disinformation regarding the stark realities of inhuman repression and people's valiant movements, spread by the J&K administration all over, is a serious breach and violation of human rights, which humanity will neither forgive nor forget.

In such a grim situation, it is the determined role of the people, which will matter and count eventually. The people are not only resolute, but they will continue their struggle till they are able to win their basic human rights denied to them by the power that be. Today the people are in a position to shake off their shackles, whatever sacrifice it may involve on their part and they will live and breathe in freedom of their choice.

Inder Mohan
Human Rights Activist
New Delhi-110091

INTRODUCTION

Heaven on earth, *Al-Jannat fil Arz, Firdaus bar rooi zameen*, the Paradise of Indes, as such is known the Valley of Kashmir, for its heavenly and picturesque beauty. Urfi Shirazi, the renowned Persian poet, eulogizes the sylvan environ of Kashmir in a couplet saying:

Har sokhta janey ki ba Kashmir dar aayad

Gar murghi kabab ast ki ba baal-o-par aayad

Which means, if a roasted fowl is brought to Kashmir, not only shall it come to life, but shall be on its wings again.

This very Kashmir has now been turned into a hell. Would Urfi come to life again, he would say that if a bird flew to Kashmir to escape the scorching heat of the Punjab plains, he would drop dead and shall be consumed by the flames emanating from the fires, which the Indian para-military forces have been setting to thousands of houses, shops and business establishments across Kashmir Valley, rendering people homeless and deprived them of their means of livelihood, besides destruction of property worth hundreds of crores of rupees.

“Kasheer”, as the inhabitants of the valley call their homeland in official circles and outside the Valley, is known as Kashmir. This forms an administrative unit of the Himalayan state of Jammu and Kashmir. Kashmiris, a distinct ethnic group, also inhabit contiguous areas of Jammu region in Doda, Rajouri, Poonch districts, Gool Gulabgarh, Mahour, Dudu Basantgarh of Udhampur district and Bani areas of Kathua district. Kashmiri language is spoken in all these areas of Jammu region and ethnically and cluturally, this forms a compact area along with the Valley of Kashmir. The population is predominantly Muslim. As per 1981-

census, the population of this area exceeded 4.5 million, which presently should be near about 6 million people. This entire population, excepting that inhabiting Udhampur and Kathua districts, has been brought under the provisions of the 'Disturbed Areas Act'. This whole population is now subjected to worst type of oppression, quite unknown in history.

The Valley is under curfew since the beginning of 1990 and occasional lifting of curfew during part of a day is to be considered benign mercy on the subjects by the [Indian] rulers. Perhaps nowhere in the World must have curfew restrictions been imposed on about 4 million people from April 6 to April 23, 1990, continuously without any relaxation. What must have happened to about 8,500 expectant mothers, who delivered babies, and to the new-born, can only be imagined. About 1,500 people, who died natural deaths during this period had to be buried secretly, and how it was accomplished is beyond words to describe. Children were deprived of milk, old and sick of medicines and the youngmen of food.

The mass killings of civilians in Srinagar on January 20-21, 1990, by the Indian security forces and indiscriminate firing on peaceful mourners carrying the body of the assassinated religious leader, Mirwaiz Molvi Farooq, on May 21, resulting in instant death of about one hundred people, did somehow come to the knowledge of the people outside the state. It was in the wake of firing on Mirwaiz's funeral procession, that the Prime Minister of India, Chander Shekhar, said in the august house of the Indian Parliament, "with the reports coming in about the mass killings, we should hang our heads in shame". It was also due to Mr. Shekhar's strong exception taken to this uncalled for massacre, that state Governor Jagmohan was called back and divested for his office, most disgracefully.

On October 1, when the entire India was preparing for celebrating the Gandhiji's birth anniversary the following day, the Indian security forces were busy in butchery and arson in Handwara town, 70 km north-west of Srinagar. Twenty five people were killed. Some fell dead with bullets. Those only injured were dragged and thrown into smouldering fire. Hundreds of houses and shops were burnt to ashes. Once a prosperous town, it is now a heap of burnt rubble. The state Governor Saxena, announced setting up of a commission of enquiry into the incident with all its members being police high-ups. In comparison, the Prime Minister of the Jewish

state Israel too announced a commission of enquiry to probe into killing of 20 Palestinians at Jerusalem in October, wherein no member had to be from the police.

Promulgation of the 'Disturbed Areas Act' on July 5, 1990, for the entire Kashmir Valley and a 20-kilometre belt in border districts of Poonch and Rajouri in Jammu region, has only given an impetus to mass killings, arson and rape by those Indian forces, who are supposed to protect life, honor and property of the citizens. Even before this promulgation, massacre of Kashmiri Muslims had become a routine for the Indian soldiers. For instance, in 1989, a contingent of the Indo-Tibetan Border Police, travelling in an ambulance van, got into the Islamia College in old Srinagar and opened gunfire on students, who were protesting peacefully, against the university authorities. An enquiry has established that fire was opened on teenaged students without any justification, but no action was ever taken against the killers. It was during the regime of former State Chief Minister, Farooq Abdullah, that more than 100 people were shot dead by the forces even for voicing their genuine grievances including peaceful demonstrators protesting against unilateral hike in power tariff without supply of adequate electricity to the consumers. The protesters were fired upon and more than six persons shot dead.

These days, quite often, dead bodies of Kashmiri youngmen are seen floating in Jhelum river in Kashmir. These bear bullet marks or marks of torture on their bodies and, as no enquiries are conducted, it is speculated that they are killed in various interrogation centers and torture cells, set up at numerous places in and outside Srinagar city by the security forces. No record exists of young and old, who are picked up from roadside or from their residences for purposes of questioning by the forces. Several deaths caused to Kashmiri Muslim citizens in interrogation centers have been established beyond any doubt by impartial witnesses including investigation journalists hailing from Srinagar and outside the state.

The state of Kashmir has been ruled from New Delhi through its quislings right from 1947. They too have been thrown into prisons or in oblivion whenever they raised their voice against discrimination adopted towards the Kashmiri Muslims in almost all walks of life. Even on the question of Indo-Kashmir accession, the doyen of the Indian politicians, Rajagopal Achari, had to say back in

1964, "The accession of Kashmir took place under conditions of great peril and for the purpose of getting immediate military assistance to save a helpless people from an unforeseen immoral external attack. It was not the intention to claim it as an irrevocable affiliation". The United Nations resolutions envisaged holding of a plebiscite in the state ascertain the wishes of the people regarding deciding about their political future. Both the governments of India and Pakistan accepted the resolutions. However, subsequently, India retracted on the pretext that Pakistan had joined the SEATO and the CENTO. It can be argued as to why the people of Kashmir be deprived of their basic right of self-determination for an act committed by Pakistan and not by those whose fate was to be decided? India asserts that the accession by the Maharaja of Kashmir had been ratified by the state constituent assembly, though India's own representative to the U.N. Security Council had categorically stated that the decision of the assembly would not have any bearing on the commitment made for holding of plebiscite. Also, the first elections to the state assembly, comprising 75 members, were so "fair and free" that all candidates were "elected unopposed" as the nomination papers of all undesirables were straightaway rejected without giving out any legal reason. That rest of the elections to the state assembly held since then were always fraudulent, has been acknowledged even in 1990, when Governor Jagmohan dissolved the assembly describing elections held to it in 1987 as "unfair and largely rigged".

In August 1956, Jawaharlal Nehru, while discussing Kashmir in the Indian Parliament, had said, "The strongest bonds that bind, will not be your armies, or even your constitution, to which so much reference has been made, but bonds which are stronger than constitution and laws and armies; bonds that bind through love, affection and understanding". Has this statement made by the first prime minister of a free India, ever been put to practice? The kind of affection showered upon the people of Kashmir is for anybody to see for himself. It is bullets, rape and arson and nothing else.

How is present attitude towards the Kashmiri people going to help. Is the present oppression and repression upon Kashmiris going to yield any results? How long will torture, arson, rape and killing by the security forces, established by the independent agencies, last? One can simply say that these methods are not going

to help at all. The Indian press and the electronic media are busy in making every effort to mislead the World through its deliberate disinformation about happenings in Kashmir.

However, there are exceptions to the rule. Some good Indian smartens have expressed themselves against unprecedented atrocities and excesses committed and the brute force that is being used to further suppress and subjugate the Kashmiri people. A humble attempt on our part to collate these reports and observations has been made. These are being reproduced in these pages along with some reports published in this context in the western press.

We are extremely grateful to a well-known and renowned friend and Kashmiri patriot whose active co-operation has enabled us to bring out this compilation. He has chosen to remain anonymous for, as he says, "My foremost priority has always been for working and not to publicize it. Also, I feel I'm already over-publicize". Our sincere thanks to him indeed.

Srinagar, Kashmir

December, 1990.

N.H.R.

A.K.K.

ABBREVIATIONS.

ABA	AMERICAN BAR ASSOCIATION.
AI	AMNESTY INTERNATIONAL.
AIR	ALL INDIA RADIO.
BJP	BHARTIYA JANTA PARTY.
BSF	BORDER SECURITY FORCE.
CPI	COMMUNIST PARTY OF INDIA.
CPM	COMMUNIST PARTY MARXIST.
CRP	CENTRAL RESERVE POLICE.
CRPF	CENTRAL RESERVE POLICE FORCE.
FIR	FIRST INFORMATION REPORT.
IB	INTELLIGENCE BUREAU.
IFS	INDIAN FEDERAL SERVICE.
IPF	INDIAN PEOPLE'S FRONT.
IPS	INDIAN POLICE SERVICE.
IPS	INSTITUTE OF POLICY STUDIES.
ISI	INTER SERVICES INTELLIGENCE.
J&K	JAMMU AND KASHMIR.
JKAP	J&K ARMED POLICE.
JKLF	J&K LIBERATION FRONT.
JI	JAMMAT-E-ISLAMI.
KAC	KASHMIRI AMERICAN COUNCIL.
MLA	MEMBER LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY.
MP	MEMBER PARLIAMENT.
MUF	MUSLIM UNITED FRONT.
NSG	NATIONAL SECURITY GUARDS.
PBUH	PEACE BE UPON HIM.
PUCL	PEOPLE'S UNION FOR CIVIL LIBERTIES.
RAW	RESEARCH & ANALYSIS WING.
RSD	RASHTRYA SEVAK DAL.
RSS	RASHTRYA SEVAK SANGH.
SS	SHEV SENA.

Kashmir :Case for Self-Determination

Minoo Masani

The state of Jammu and Kashmir was never a part of India. Lord Mountbatten gave the Maharaja of Kashmir the option to join either India or Pakistan. Led by Sheikh Abdullah the Muslims of Kashmir persuaded the Maharaja to accede to India on the strength of a solemn promise that the accession would be subject to plebiscite.

A lady asked me other day, "why Gorbachov would not agree to the Lithuanian demand for independence from the Soviet Union?" I countered with the question: "Do you believe that Kashmir belongs to India?" "Yes, of course" she said. "That is why?" I said. "There are too many Russians who wrongly believe that Lithuania belongs to the Soviet Union, just as you believe that Kashmir belongs to India; so poor Gorbachov does not feel free to accede openly to the Lithuanian demand." Unfortunately, the good lady's answer could have been by nine out of ten Indians. Let me make it clear at the outset that while my sympathies are with those who want the valley to be independent, I condemn the methods of violence and terror to which some of them are resorting.

I am delighted to read two recent articles in the press, one by Ajit Bhattacharya, entitled: "The last chance in Kashmir" which appeared in "The Statesman", on 7th January and the other by Pran Chopra, which appeared in the "Independent" of 15th January under the title: "We have failed Kashmir". From what these experienced and prominent members of the press whose patriotism cannot be doubted have said, the responsibility for the current situation lies not with the people of Kashmir but with the Government of India in Delhi. Even more encouraging have been the statesman-like words of Mr. Simranjit Singh Mann on 26th January, asking the Governor of Kashmir to lift the siege by the Indian Army, he went on to say, "The Indian Government is bound by Article 51 of the Constitution

to its international commitments. Under the United Nations charter the State of Jammu and Kashmir is disputed territory". He further observed "The people of Kashmir have their rights and I support every democratic action. Plebiscite is not a bad word. The right of vote must prevail over the right of the bullet." Along with me, there are thus at least three Musketeers in the field. Having been a student of this matter since independence, I heartily concur with these gentlemen even though it is not fashionable to say so.

Conditional Accession: The State of Jammu and Kashmir was never part of India. Let me repeat that at the time of the transfer of power by the British, Kashmir was not part of India. Lord Mountbatten gave the Maharaja of Kashmir the option, if he so desired, to join either India or Pakistan. The Maharaja, better known as Mr. A, dithered but led by Sheikh Mohammad Abdullah, the Muslims of Kashmir persuaded the Maharaja to accede to India on the strength of a solemn promise given by Prime Minister Jawaharlal Nehru, that the accession would be subject to a plebiscite which would enable the people of Kashmir to decide their destiny. India later forgot all about the plebiscite and to this day the people of Kashmir Valley have been denied the right of self-determination.

Nehru's Regret: The later story is a sad one. Nehru joined in a conspiracy to make a *'coup d'etat'* against the Kashmir Prime Minister Sheikh Abdullah, arrested him and put the corrupt Bakshi Ghulam Mohammad as a puppet in his place. Abdullah then remained under trial on false charges for about twelve years because the case against him could not be proved. In January 1963 my friend, Lal Bahadur Shastri, who was then minister without portfolio in Nehru's Government told me that Jawaharlal Nehru wanted Abdullah to be released. "*Maine Sheikh Saheb ko badanam kiya hai*" (I have done great wrong to Sheikh Abdullah). So the Sheikh was duly released and sent by Nehru to Pakistan to negotiate a settlement of the Kashmir problem with President Ayub Khan. He was to bring Ayub Khan to Delhi to sign an agreement if he agreed to do so. Sheikh Saheb telephoned Nehru from Pakistan to say that Ayub was willing for a settlement and so the day of his visit to Delhi was fixed for June 20. Tragically, Nehru died in May and Kashmir remains a problem to plague both countries.

JP's Mission to Pakistan: When Lal Bahadur Shastri was Prime Minister, he sent my friend, Jayaprakash Narayn, to Pakistan

to find if the settlement of Kashmir was possible. When Jayaprakash returned to Delhi, he saw me before he saw Lal Bahadur and he told me what Ayub had suggested. Jayaprakash told me that Ayub suggested that "Ladakh and Jammu should join India but that the Kashmir Valley should be independent and, as in the Austrian Treaty between the Soviet Union and the USA, India and Pakistan should guarantee the independence and integrity of the valley". When Jayaprakash returned from Lal Bahadur Shastri later that evening, he was depressed because the Indian Prime Minister had failed to respond. "*Yeh cheez bahot acchi hai, lekin Parliament aur meri party nahin manne gi*" (This is very good, but it will not be acceptable to parliament and my party). How sad, I commented to Jayaprakash that perhaps he and I were the only Indian, who could see our own country's Imperialism along with that of other countries.

Rajajis' warning: Rajaji, always the statesman and a realist, wrote in "Swarajya" as far back as September 25, 1965, ".... it would be as foolish as any foolish thing a nation can do, if we proceed on the assumption, that we can hold any people down by sheer force and without making it absolutely manifest to world nations that we have the consent of the people concerned by imposing any administration on them. Like injustice, the political decision concerning Kashmir, or any part of it, should be on the basis of self-determination....."

It is all very well to send Jagmohan as Governor and start shooting. The first result of this repression is a revolt of the Kashmir police, who have alleged atrocities committed by the Indian Armed Forces on the people of Kashmir. So, now we have only an army of occupation to rely on. It is possible by brutal terrorism to suppress a national urge for freedom, but for how long? Don't recent events in Eastern Europe have a lesson for our government?

Neutralizing the Valley: Many of my friends tell me, that if a plebiscite was held, the people of Kashmir would vote to join Pakistan. I do not agree. They would vote for independence. But why not try this out by asking Pakistan government whether they would join India by neutralizing the valley on the lines suggested by President Ayub Khan? If she declines, the blame will be on Pakistan. If she agrees, let us go ahead and do the right thing.

This advice may not be palatable to many, but sooner or later, it will have to be carried out, so why waste time? Why not turn to the path of conciliation right now? For one thing, we can stop spending the large amounts of money that we rather stupidly spend on Kashmir without getting any gratitude.

Dalit Voice, Bangalore, August 1,1990.

Kashmir: The Ground Realities

Ashoke Mitra

The stakes in Kashmir, it could be argued, are much too high, and a no-nonsense Governor is the only hope. May be, or may not be. Settling old scores with Dr. Farooq Abdullah, or to punish him for his waywardness, is now a pointless exercise. He and the National Conference have little credibility left in the Kashmir Valley. Where does that leave the Union of India though? With the virtual disappearance of the National Conference, the last link between the ethos of Kashmir nationalism and that of a multi-lingual, multi-cultural, multi-religious Indian nation is in fact also snapped. The alienation between the two streams of consciousness is complete and the circumstances are certainly much worse than they ever were since 1953.

A strong Governor can temporarily restore an aura of law and order. Ground realities in Kashmir will however not be altered thereby. Disenchantment with India is a near-universal phenomenon. This denouement could be on account of mistakes committed by Mrs. Indira Gandhi, it could be because of the lack of political acumen on the part of Farooq Abdullah and the eagerness he displayed in 1987 to regain his chief ministerial slot by surrendering to New Delhi and which disgusted his erstwhile admirers. 'Recounting of old wives' tales will not however obliterate the hard facts as they have emerged. We can, for form's sake, complain about infiltration from across the border. We can implore the authorities in Pakistan to observe the letter and spirit of the Simla Agreement. We can send emissaries here, there and everywhere to try to explain our stand that religion has nothing to

do with the Kashmir imbroglio, which, in addition, continues to be matter wholly belonging to our domestic arena. But can we put our hand to our heart and assert that is all there is to it? What about the people in the valley, what about their emotions and sentiments? We may cling to the pretence that results of the November 1989 polls for the Lok Sabha seats, in which not even five per cent of the Valley's electorate bothered to participate, constitute the summum bonum of democratic representation; we will be only fooling ourselves.

Our illusions will not sway the mood of the sullen young people in Srinagar another Bakshi Ghulam Mohammad either; thirtyseven years have rolled by, it is, as the Americans say, a different kind of ball game. Other things remaining the same, we will therefore be forced to rule Kashmir only through an army of occupation. For how long, and at what cost? One or two stragglers could be expected to be still around to act as our servitors. With each month and week, even their ranks will dwindle. Our declamation to keep Kashmir whatever the cost notwithstanding, sooner or later we will be forced to ask whether the return was really worth the outlay. We can provide by our bellicosity, some instant satisfaction to the breast-beating jingoes, but will that promote either our long-term international interests, or strengthen our claim of being a just republic? year after weary year, huge dollops of scarce resources, which could otherwise be spend on expanding the nation's irrigation and power potential or for blanketing the countryside with a crash programme of nutrition and literacy, will need to be pre-empted so that the people of Kashmir, comprising less than one-half of one per cent of the nation, could be bribed and the army of occupation kept equipped to jump into action of occasions when bribery fails to click. Who will decide, whether such an arrangement indeed maximizes, for all times, the nation's welfare?

Soliciting foreign support for our stand in Kashmir cannot be expected to yield many dividends; the world has grown much too cynical in the past few years. Why beat about the bush, we had our opportunities in Kashmir; we muffed each one of them. A minority government at the Centre has its limitations. A permanent army of occupation is still a non-answer; statesmanship demands that, alongside of offering the National Conference a further chance, a channel of communications is also opened with those who are currently rampaging on the streets in Srinagar. We have no right to

hold a people against their will either we talk to them and try to win back their confidence, or we let them go to whatever fate they want to drift into.

The Telegraph, Calcutta February, 1990

The Insurgency

Anuradha Dutt

The immediate cause of the current insurgency lies in the rigging of the 1987 Assembly polls by the National Conference and the Congress-I, and the subsequent maladministration. It is this that added fuel to the already smouldering resentment of the people and encouraged them to accept the hardliners' view that in India they could only be second class citizens. This conviction, ably nurtured by fundamentalist secessionists, has taken deep root in the people's minds. First, the Kashmiris witnessed the subversion of democracy when the Opposition Muslim United Front (MUF) polling agents were beaten and jailed. Thereafter, they saw the disintegration of the administrative machinery under a pleasure-loving chief minister, Farooq Abdullah.

The original sin lay in not allowing them the right to self-determination, though Pakistan has tried to raise the Kashmir problem on the agenda of the United Nations' Security Council.

But when the only lure that India holds for them democracy was crudely subverted by a rapacious band of politicians, beginning with the Sheikh Abdullah's arrest by the Congress government in 1953, his release in 1964 and rearrest in 1965, and his incarceration for three years their disenchantment with the Centre was complete. In this climate of eroded confidence anti-India sentiments, rather than pro-Pakistan ones, became rife.

The Sheikh's dramatic release in 1968 and the election of his party, the National Conference to power in the first genuine Assembly elections in the State in July 1977, under the Janata regime, restored the people's faith in the democratic process. They felt that they had an instrument to choice their opinion in the

Sheikh's government. After his death, they continued to view his heir-successor, Dr. Farooq, as their democratically selected representative. But the Congress government at the Centre resumed its dictatorial politics in the state and so too the process of alienating the Kashmiris by getting Jagmohan, who was governor then, to dismiss the Farooq Abdullah government.

The enormous damage done by this action to the Kashmir psyche was compounded by Abdullah's opportunistic alliance with the Congress-I before the 1987 Assembly polls. The man who had seemed to symbolise Kashmir's political destiny, and had become something of a hero after his dismissal, had in one stroke crossed over to the other side. Still, they trusted in the electoral process and came out to vote in the Assembly elections.

The massive rigging at the polling booths not only eliminated the chances of viable Opposition emerging and an outlet for dissension, but also the prospect of the Kashmiris integrating with India through the ballot. Intermittent outbreak of militancy had been a routine feature earlier. Once in a while, for instance, pro-Pakistan elements would celebrate India's defeat in an international cricket match and turn violent on some pretext or the other. There would be police firing and imposition of curfew until conditions returned to normal. But militancy on an organised scale was absent. Circumstances today are very different from those prevalent in 1986, the period of Jagmohan's first stint as governor. Today he is faced with civil war conditions, with militants and even the crowds, attacking the security forces. As our press car slowly treads its way through a milling crowd, a man pushes his head through the window and screams, "We will kill Jagmohan!"

A cross sampling of mob reactions in some of the most sensitive areas reflects the simmering violence among a traditionally gentle people. Defying the curfew, they throng around the car, forcing it to a halt. There is a sea of angry faces all around. There are only young boys and men. This is the Nowhatta area of Srinagar, which has a past history of tension. Everyone has a point to make. Finally, Mohammad Ashraf, a student, acts as the spokesman. "We are opposed to the government of India. Because there is violence, subjugation and people die. This has been so right from 1947. We want independence and not to accede to Pakistan. Our Hindu and

Sikh brothers are with us. In every corner we will hear the voice of freedom," he says.

Another student, Shaukat Ahmad, complains against the police excesses on the night of January 19 and the subsequent firing on protestors the following day. He says, "Now everyone wants freedom". Mohammad Salim reflects the pervasive sentiments when he says, "The forces should be withdrawn first. Our warning to India is that a bullet will be answered with a bullet. We will not tolerate (the repression) anymore."

The car's progress is slow as it is stopped by jawans and CRPF men and searched almost every step of the way. At Bachpora, another throng converges on the vehicle and blocks road. As word gets around, more and more men come surging down the road. Their purpose is just to talk, to find a forum through which they can voice their anguish.

Ghulam Mohammad, a businessman, articulately expounds their sentiments, "The issue is the right of self-determination which is already on the UN agenda. And this right has not been given to the Kashmiris. All these years there has been suppression and mass killings. The para-military forces and army and all Government of India employees should be removed. Kashmir is a colony of India. There is a ban on the press. The situation here is worse than behind the iron curtain. If India feels that military suppression will solve the problem then it is wrong. The people want the right to self-determination. If the people of India are committed to democracy they should give us that right."

Further on, a group of women spills onto the road. They are voluble in their abuse of the security forces and the searches conducted by them. The combing operation, the people claim, has subjected even the neutral sections of the populace to an unprecedented degree of humiliation.

The Illustrated Weekly of India, Bombay, February 4, 1990

Kashmir: Valley of Tears

Inderjit Badhwar

A tidal wave of protest that has engulfed the Valley began to peak last week as a "Quit Kashmir" *hartal* [strike] paralysed life in major cities. Srinagar should have been bustling with tourists, but a graveyard-like silence took hold. The *hartal* was only the latest manifestation of a continuing agitation, separatist in its outward expression and pro-Pakistani in its extreme form. Demonstrations and police firings have claimed some 50 lives in the last year-more than in any period in the last two decades.

Not since August 1953, when Sheikh Abdullah was arrested and jailed on subversion charges, and hundreds of people were killed or incarcerated as valley-wide protests erupted, has Kashmir seen such an outburst of separatist frenzy. As veteran Congress (I) leader Trilochan Dufta put it: "It seems as if the pro-plebiscite movement has been revived."

But there is one vital difference: the militants, mostly young and unemployed, or petty shopkeepers, are fighting with guns and bombs. Mercifully, however, they have not yet learnt to kill. They have still not tasted blood. But that, police sources say, is not far away. A deputy superintendent of police, in charge of one of the newly formed commando units, who had faced an irate mob in the old city's ghetto area in which several youths were injured in police firing, said: "They have lost their fear. They stand right in front of your guns and dare you to shoot them. How can you fight people like these? In the past the most they did was pelt stones or set off crude home-made bombs and then ducked for cover. This behaviour is new, it is almost un-Kashmiri."

For the militants are rapidly becoming heroes and legends. And martyrs. Secretly admired not just by the streetwise lumpen of the cities' endless ghettos, but also by intellectuals and businessmen who discuss their exploits over scotch and soda. Says Shariq Ali, an exporter of Kashmiri *namdas* and handicrafts: "We've always had a slave mentality. Now there's a secret feeling of pride that the slaves are fighting back." In Kahnyar and Naidkadal, where a pitched battle

took place in April during a four-day *hartal* following the death of the father of People's League leader Shabbir Shah in police custody, the "*naujawans*" [youngsters] who had fired at the police with Kalashnikovs were carried on the shoulders of admiring mobs who showered them with kisses and milk in traditional Kashmiri revelry style.

In Srinagar's Maisuma Bazaar, Ashiq Hussein, 18, an unemployed son of a taxi driver went from hero to martyr in one year, after the police held him in jail for interrogation for six months, suspecting him of manufacturing bombs. Two months ago, he was shot through the heart by a police bullet during a demonstration. His grandmother Rahti and his mother Hameeda, who live in a crowded tenement, still cradle his photograph and wail with grief. "He was a good boy," shrieks Hameeda. "He liked to play cricket and carrom. And just before he was shot, he had been promised a government job. Life has become so cheap. We spit on Farooq Abdullah."

Maisuma is typical of Kashmir's ghettos. Serpentine alleys. Garbage-choked drains that empty into the Jhelum. Sheep, dogs, cattle mixing with children who tote toy guns. Suffocation. The locality is known for the bravery of its women who took to the streets for Sheikh Abdullah, when he was battling the Dogra rulers and later, during the post-1955 plebiscite movement. If you said anything against the Sheikh's family in public, chances were you'd be lynched. Today the same could happen, if you praise that family.

"Look around you," says Manzur Ahmed, 28, a shopkeeper in the area. "For 40 years, despite promises, there's been no improvement. Everything is filthier, grimmer. There are no jobs. To enter engineering or medical colleges officials are bribed with Maruti cars. When we protest we are branded terrorists".

Mohammed Yaseen Malik, 22, is also from Maisuma. He was a die-hard Muslim United Front (MUF) activist during the assembly election campaign. He sports an Imran Khan hairstyle, and has intense, burning eyes. He was involved in several protest demonstrations last year: was arrested, beaten up, viciously abused. He had a congenital heart ailment that needed treatment. When the authorities refused to get him medical help, he went on a hunger fast which led to his release. He said in an interview shortly after

leaving jail: "They gave me no reasons. They spat on me. They locked me in a small cage. They called me a 'Pakistani bastard'. I told them I wanted my rights,. "Today, along with Shabbir Shah, Ashfaq Majid, Javed Ahmed Mir, and Hamid Sheikh, Yaseen is on the police's most wanted list with a price of Rs 30,000 on his head.

Afzal Shah (not his real name), 22, is a tailor in Baramulla district. Burn marks on his left thigh administered by hot iron rods and cigarette burns on his forehead and left shoulder attest to his recent three months in police custody. He was arrested in Srinagar shortly after intelligence agencies identified him as having crossed the border last year for a five-month training stint. He is now out on bail, and faces charges of crossing the border illegally.

The massive *namaaz* (prayer) was preceded by the reading of an honour roll of the valley's youth, who have been killed in police firings over the last few months. The Maulana calls them martyrs of Kashmir and the congregation prays for their souls. On the pathway to the mosque, hawkers hawk portraits of [Ex-President of Pakistan] General Mohammad Zia-ul-Haq for Rs 2 a piece along with newspapers containing pictures of people killed in the various agitations [in Kashmir].

Around the Jamia Masjid lie nests of slums whose inhabitants are small traders in cement and crockery, carpet weavers, handicraft artisans, butchers and *wazas* (Kashmiri chefs). Past Safikadal, where Kalashnikovs were first used by militants, past the Nawakadal bridge, a favourite bomb target of the militants, lie Rajourikadal, the Mrwaiz's stronghold, Borikadal, Kahnyar and Naidkadal. all today referred to as '*Chhota Pakistan*' [small Pakistan].

The youth of these areas have christened various mohallas with code names like Khalistan, Baluchistan, Palestine. In the centre of this area is what the militants label their Akal Takht, a neighbourhood called Zainakadal.

Compared to the main shopping areas of Srinagar, the hopelessly congested and claustrophobic areas of Lal Chowk and Badshah chowk, where *khaki* uniforms form the backdrop of every activity, the Zainakdal area is virtually free of police. Shopkeepers and artisans talk freely about creating Pakistan or 'liberating' Kashmir. Last month a pitched battle took place here. A painter's

shop, owned by Mohammad Amin, was riddled with 22 bullet holes. One made its way through the chin of a portarit of the poet Iqbal [1877--1938]. Says Mushtaq, a shopkeeper, pointing to an unpaved road: "This is our *Parikrama* leading to our Akal Takht. It is here that the Indians will have to mount Operation Red Star. But we are not afraid. When you come here next year you will have to bring your passport." And the crowd around him intones in chorus: "*Inshallah*."

Mention the name of Farooq Abdullah and the eyes turn murderous. "He is a disco dancer," they say. "He develops golf courses and cable cars, while we go to hell. Our weavers and artisans starve, and he and his ministers steal all the money. And when we protest he shoots us and throws us in jail." And it is in neighbourhoods such as these in large parts of South Kashmir in the Jammāt-e-Islami dominated Sopore, in Anantnaga, in the backward hill district of Kupwara, where people eke out subsistence existences that the youth have begun to form "suicide squads" aimed at ushering in what is being whispered about as a "Quit Kashmir Movement".

Sub-groups, owing partial or organisational allegiance to the People's League and the Liberation Front have emerged in the neighbourhoods: Al-Fatah: Al-Jehad: Victory Commandos: Jaanbaaz Force: Maqbool Force. And taking a lead from [Indian] Punjab, they have begun to issue regular press releases

Says, People's Conference leader Abdul Ghani Lone, who was himself once considered a radical firebrand: "The sad thing is that moderate leadership is now being finished. Our youths now prefer to listen to the sound of the gun rather than even to my voice. there are no longer any institutions here, no political heroes." Some 40 per cent of the valley's population is between 20 and 30 years of age. Even during the Sheikh's time when agitations, like the one in 1964 following the theft of the Prophet's hair, turned virulently anti-Indian, stalwarts like Maulana Saeed of Gandherbal, and Moiuddin Kara, and Maulana Masoodi, were able to contain it or change its direction. Today, these elders admit, they are unable to influence the youths, who harbour a universal betrayal by all [these] political leaders.

Kashmir's turbulent history is that the state, even as the rest of India burned in communal frenzy, never experienced communal violence except for a brief period in 1986 preceding Governor's Rule. Its religious tradition has been one of Sufi tolerance as against that of the Jamaat-e-Islami that subscribes to the Wahabi belief of an Islamic state. The Jamaat's hold, however, is confined to pockets in Baramulla, and it propagates its ideology mostly through fundamentalist schools run by a trust.

But now, as the moderate leadership declines and the hotheads take over, minorities are beginning to feel threatened. Says Dr Avtar Karishan Ganjoo, a Kashmiri Pandit, who was municipal chairman of Sopore for nine years and who now runs a charitable medical practice right next to the Jamaat-e-Islami office: "The majority community has always respected us. But something in the atmosphere is changing."

If there is a major communal conflagration not just Kashmir but the entire country will burn. There is not much time left in which to stem the tide of extremism. And nothing will work as a better antidote to Pakistan and separatism than a heavy dose of Indian democracy. Otherwise the sentiment that Kashmir is denied its fundamental right to choose its own leaders, because the rest of the country discriminates against it on the basis of religion will continue to gain currency.

And, no matter how irrational the vision, the youth of Kashmir will persist in the belief that their rights will be better safeguarded within a Muslim country like Pakistan. Kashmiri youths are beginning to learn from the tactics of Punjab militants.

India Today, May 31, 1989.

Kashmir For Kashmiris

V.M. Tarkunde

The Kashmir situation represents one of the most complex and intractable problems faced by the Government of India. While it is not easy to find a solution of the Kashmir issue, it is clear that any attempt to solve it must be guided by the basic consideration that a

people who have a distinct language, culture and religion and who constitute an overwhelming majority in the Kashmir Valley cannot be retained in India by force and against their will for an indefinite period. A plebiscite in the near future is not a proper solution to the Kashmir problem, but a plebiscite will become inevitable if it is found that the Kashmiri people cannot be persuaded before long to voluntarily embrace Indian nationality by a process of emotional integration.

.....Once of the biggest mistakes committed by Jawaharlal Nehru was to back out the plebiscite proposal on the wholly irrelevant ground that Pakistan in the meantime had accepted arms and entered into a military pact with the United States. The offer of plebiscite was not in the nature of a concession made by India to Pakistan, but was a recognition of the right of self-determination of the people of Jammu and Kashmir. The denial of the right of self-determination by India on irrelevant grounds led naturally to a plebiscite movement in Kashmir. It became a secessionist movement and was further strengthened by the subsequent policy of the government of India which showed that the government had no confidence in the people of Kashmir. This was evident from the fact that every election in Jammu Kashmir, except the one in 1977, was rigged at the instance of the Indian government. This convinced the people of Kashmir that India did not want them to have the democratic right of self-government. The situation was made worse by the frequent communal riots, which took place in India and in which the minority community suffered the most. This naturally strengthened an anti-Indian feeling of Kashmiri Muslims. Finally, the coalition between the National Conference and the Congress (I) under the weak leadership of Farooq Abdullah convinced the people of Kashmir that they cannot remain in India without losing their separate identity. There has thus been a growing disenchantment of the people of Kashmir from India and the position has now been reached when almost the entire population of Kashmir has become anti-India.

During this process of growing disenchantment, there was an interregnum when a solution of Kashmir issue appeared to be within reach.... This was when Bangladesh became separate from Pakistan and when the Simla Agreement was reached between Indira Gandhi and Zulfikar Ali Bhutto. The essence of the

agreement was that India and Pakistan decided to respect the Actual Line of Control between India and Pakistan in the territory on Jammu and Kashmir occupied by them. They further decided that the Kashmir issue should be finally settled by mutual negotiations. In the negotiations which followed, India should have made a firm offer that the State of Jammu and Kashmir should be finally divided along with Line of Actual Control.... Thus a good opportunity to settle the Kashmir issue was lost.

There is a tendency in India to attribute the present disturbance in Kashmir to the machinations of Pakistan. It is very likely that Pakistan has provided military training and arms to the militants in Kashmir as well as Punjab and Pakistan is clearly not responsible for the disaffection of the people of the valley from the Government of India. The cause of the Kashmir debacle is the initial denial of the right of self-determination and the subsequent anti-democratic policies pursued by the Indian Government.

A humanist can have no doubt that the people of Kashmir should have the right of self-determination. Kashmir has been the main cause of the antagonism... between India and Pakistan... Indian has been diverting a considerable part of its resources in maintaining an army in Jammu and Kashmir and in granting subsidies in various forms to the people of that state. Two costly wars have been waged between India and Pakistan during the post-independence period. Because of mutual distrust, disproportionate military expenditure has been incurred by both the countries at the cost of resources which could have been utilised for economic betterment. An early solution of the Kashmir problem will be of great benefit to the peoples of both India and Pakistan. A grant of plebiscite to the people of the Kashmir Valley is the obvious solution.

Radical Humanist, New Delhi, March 1990.

Present Insurgency is a Peoples' Movement

Shiraz Sidhva

An uneasy calm hangs over the Valley. The day is unusually warm, but few Kashmiris dare emerge from their houses to enjoy the weather. It is Friday (9 February) and curfew is still in force.

Driving into the city from Srinagar airport, one passes a series of checkpoints manned by heavily-armed CRPF (Central Reserve Police Force) guards who look into the boots of cars and demand curfew passes. Curfew is now a way of life in this once-upon-a-time paradise. Besides the occasional rumble of paramilitary and police vehicles and the menacing whirr of service helicopters, there is a deathly silence. Unofficial estimates have it that nearly a lakh of army, para-military and police personnel have been deployed in Kashmir in the past six weeks.

If this is not war, what it is? On Saturday mourning (10 February) people emerged hesitantly to stock up essentials. The mood in the bazaar is sullen and resentful. Two days ago, CRPF men reacted to a cylinder blast by firing on innocent shopkeepers in Srinagar's main shopping mall. Dr. Mohammad Yousuf of Bagat Barzalla lost his young son because he happened to be standing there. "You bring in these military men who have spent their lives learning how to kill when provoked," mourns a senior police official, "if the government thinks this is the way to curb a people's agitation, they will soon see how wrong they are".

Lal Chowk keeps its shutters down in protest. "In any case, what business has there been for the last two months?: asks a despondent shawl dealer. "Those of us who had any doubts that we are suppressed by the Centre have them no more".

At Panta Chowk, seven kilometers from Srinagar, at any army checkpoint, trucks and buses are emptied and incoming passengers are lined up, their hands raised, to be mercilessly searched. A week ago, a policeman was shot dead when he argued with CRPF men that he was a man of the law.

"Stop and get out the car at once," screams an army major, as he yanks a photographer of the press out of the car and grabs his film roll. A top a craggy hill there are young jawans with their rifles pointed towards the road. "What will become of us?" wonders a woman as her luggage is searched. The army officer is apologetic after the roll of film is safely in his pocket. "We are expecting some violence tomorrow", he confides, "we can't risk any arms being smuggled into the Valley."

The next day, Sunday (11 February), is the sixth death anniversary of Maqbool Butt who was hanged in 1984 in Tihar Jail

in Delhi. Butt is one of the martyrs of the Jammu and Kashmir Liberation Front. As recently as two years ago, few responded to a call for a band to commemorate the day. But in 1990, things are very different. Whatever the Governor Jagmohan and his advisors might say nobody can deny that the present insurgency is a peoples movement and a few more killing by military men and a few more weeks of curfew can only serve to fuel the people's rage.

In Anantnag, the hotbed of separatist activity over the last 40 years, only stray dogs and CRPF men dare to venture out. There has been curfew there since 21 January, with the exception of a few hours on certain days. Small boys, unmindful of the rain and restless at being cooped up for weeks, play in a tiny courtyard. They are amused to see a visitor. "This is actually Islamabad," a man in a tattered shawl declares, and he is not lying-the boards in the deserted bazaar all read 'Islamabad'. "*Islam Ka naam enko dil mein khataкта hai* (the name of Islam hurts them)," says a woman beating her fists one the wall. "They can change the names of all the places to Ramgarh and Krishnagar, but here they can see only snakes and more snakes, so they insist on calling us Anantnag," she hisses for effect. Does she feel being a part of Pakistan would make her life easier? "Oh no, only *azadi*".

Shopkeepers cannot do business and are often too scared to open up. Many families have moved away; others wonder what will become of them; some just look to God for help. "We have stopped eating meat," says Shakira, a young mother – for a Kashmiri that is the ultimate sacrifice. Next door, in the more affluent home of Ghulam Qadir Kanu, the woman has a more heart-rending tale to tell. Her 15 years old son, Sajid Ahmed, has been languishing in the Central jail for the last seven months. The family insists that he is innocent. "Our children throw stones at the BSF as a prank and they answer with bullets or just take them away," laments the mother of the jailed boy. "They harass us with house-to-house searches and our lives have become reduced to counting the hours."

The phones of local journalists who have been reporting the problem are 'mysteriously' dead. While a handful of foreign journalists can be seen, the national press is conspicuous by its absence. However, the Governor staunchly denies that there has been any attempt to gag the press. But he adds that he is displeased about "irresponsible" reporting by certain radio networks. "Would

Margaret Thatcher be happy if you created trouble in Northern Ireland?" he asks. There are rumours that a planeload of journalists will be taken on a conducted tour of Kashmir to assess the situation for themselves. And yet, local journalists are denied curfew passes after eight p.m.

"We have orders that all curfew passes for the press have been cancelled," says a CRPF officer, confronting this journalist on Sunday, "in any case this is no place for a woman to be loitering alone." "For the first time in my life I feel unsafe in Kashmir," says a well-known businessman. "I never dreamt that things would be so bad."

Business in Kashmir has received a major setback. The seasonal tourism industry has suffered as a result of the unrest in the Valley. "I haven't opened my shop in two months," confides a carpet exporter.

In downtown Zainakadal, the mood of the people is rebellious. On Monday (12 February) morning, two hours after curfew is lifted, demoralised clutches of people emerge from their squalid shanty dwellings to walk in the rain. The presence of the CRPF irks them. "These Hindus kill us every day," shouts a self-styled student leader, as the all too familiar slogan "Indian dogs go back" rings out.

At the corner of Aishan Sahib in the area, the crowd burns a credely-stitched, stain and cotton Indian flag. The people here hate the word "India", so much that they have papered it over on Air India hoardings. Similarly, they have covered the word "Bharat" at petrol pumps.

It is not as if Jagmohan's Srinagar is more peaceful. The bomb blasts continue. On Tuesday (13 February) morning, the petrol pump on Maulana Azad Road is partially damaged in a blast. "This is the first time the militants have attacked private property", the owner says. Earlier, part of his carpet factory was destroyed in a fire, but only because it was close to state property. The militants have always maintained that they pick their targets carefully to ensure that the common people do not get hurt.

That the people are with the militants is quite clear. In the one month since the new administration has taken over, not a single

militant has been captured. "The search operations are fruitless because of the widespread support and it would be foolish to dismiss this as the result of fear alone," warns a retired judge. The situation has deteriorated rapidly after the state government, with the active connivance of Rajiv Gandhi, blatantly rigged the 1987 elections. Many of the hardcore militants were MUF (Muslim United Front) supporters and campaigned for that party. Nadiha, a local journalist's wife, remembers the day the results came in. "The MUF was leading everywhere and suddenly it was announced that they had lost," she recalls. "Nobody cried that day. We were all stunned into silence."

"The root cause of this crisis is that the Kashmiri people have been taken of granted by their own leadership," says a superintendent of police, who belongs to the state "we require hard retrospective thinking – the *Lalas* sitting in Delhi have to search their hearts and look into why all this economic and political instability started in the first place." He refused to buy the line that India has been pumping money too long into Kashmir. "I have reason to believe that 70 percent of the money (Rs. 800 crores) is grant loans and 30 per cent soft loans, whereas other states are allowed 90 per cent soft loans and 10 per cent grant loans," he says dismissively. "A few colleges here and a hospital there do not make a difference." The senior police official likens the problem to a very serious disease. "Calling in the para-military and the army only serves to numb the problem. The man might not cry out for some time, but that does not mean that the disease has topped spreading,"

Jammu and Kashmir's erstwhile Chief Minister, Farooq Abdullah, pays fleeting visits to war-torn Srinagar, between forays to the Himalayan idylls of Gulmarg and Tanmarg. SUNDAY'S repeated efforts to meet the 'disco chief minister' as he is popularly known proved futile. But nearly every affluent and upper-middle class Kashmiri is filled with remorse that "Farooq Sahab" played into the hands of Rajive Gandhi's government and betrayed. "We were fools to have bartered our lives away. First the father plundered us, then the son," says a bitter laundry worker. "They were both *gaddars* (traitors)!"

Jagmohan's sops which include the reservation of 3,000 BSF posts for Kashmiris, only bring him more unpopularity. "It is like adding insult to injury," says a local politician who has little

influence left. "First they train their guns on us and they ask us to join them." He is incredulous. "Which Kashmiri worth his salt will turn upon his own people?"

The militants who now enjoy the widespread support of the people are slowly abandoning their earlier caution and restraint. The violence and the terror continue. The new administrators may be well-intentioned, but there is more at stake than regular power and water supply. What are the options for India? "We cannot let go, otherwise the whole country will turn secessionist," says a senior bureaucrat in the Home Ministry.

Meanwhile, arms and people continue to be smuggled in from Pakistan Occupied Kashmir to help their "trapped brethren", as one local put it. And the doctor (Jagmohan) who came to administer the healing touch may have to quickly devise new ways of containing the civil war that ravages Kashmir. For, brute force might be the last nail in the coffin.

Sunday, Calcutta, February 25, 1990

Accidental Terrorists

Ayesha Kagal

It was fine day. And his pale blue and white striped T-shirt and white jeans seemed colour coordinated with the backdrop a blinding Taj Mahal against an azure sky. From his picture postcard present the youth smiled into the camera and his future jauntily.

Today, on a peeling green wall of a tiny room in the second floor dwelling in Sonwar mohalla, Srinagar, the photograph reposes in an old wooden frame. And his mother stares at it. Fayaz Ahmed Butt, her youngest son who worked in the education department, had gone to pick up a newspaper during curfew relaxation and didn't return home. But at last she saw his body.

Earlier this year in an army firing in Sonwar bazar, two lanes away, in the same mohalla, a bullet ripped through the face of Mushtaq Malik, a 21-year old first year B.Com. student who also attended stenography classes. Mustaq's death was confirmed by his

family when they identified his wrist-watch, after he had been buried.

Beyond heroes who hit the headlines, it is these growing incidental deaths that keep the *azadi* fires smouldering.

Mushtaq Malik's sister, Samina Jan, is a rivetingly beautiful ten-year old, who sits cross-legged and wide-eyed, her white veiled face cupped in her palms, drinking in the talk around her.

It is the month of Ramzan, the most auspicious month in the Islamic calendar, the month when the Koranic revelations began, the month when every good deed is rewarded from 10 to 700 times. And the retelling of her brother's death acquires a ritual quality as a community gropes for new ways to cope with grief, to comprehend their transformed reality. As her people weave a fresh mythology of martyrdom, she is a participant in the process.

What will her dreams be?

Who is a terrorist in Kashmir today? And a newspaper which showed a black and white photograph of school boy was thrust at you.

The picture is of Nazeer Ahmed Sofi, a 14-year old student who lived in Soura and had gone, as usual, to the home of a neighbouring teacher. Bullet holes dot the walls and floor of the slush-surrounded house, bits of rags and paper keep the cold from creeping in through the windows. But fear still stains the air and the voices of Bhushan Lal, the teacher and his family.

On March 31, as he was teaching the boy they heard sounds of shots and a growing commotion. Everyone in the house scattered for safety – some to the store room, others to the attic. Nazeer ducked under the bed. When the CRPF broke down the door, Nazeer, hidden in the first room on the ground floor, was hauled out and shot.

Already alienation, mounting rapidly since Mr. Jagmohan's takeover in January, was running high, drawing in its fold the till then exempt upper middle class. By the beginning of this month, affluence and influence were no longer safeguards against suspicion and arbitrary para-military action. They no longer divided rich from

poor. The divide change. It was Kashmiri and non-Kashmiri. In Kashmir to be a Kashmiri Muslim was suspect. "Hindu or Muslim?" is the routine question at the numerous BSF and CRP barriers driving into the city.

At home in Srinagar, Asif Ahmed, a prominent businessman, on the way to the airport with his wife, son and two daughters was stopped by the para-military forces and his valid curfew pass and family's airline tickets were ignored. He and his son were asked to go, leaving the women behind. A local DSP who happened to pass by, fortunately recognised them and allowed the family to leave.

Today, truth flips faces somewhere in the middle of the Jawahar Tunnel, the two and a half kms long, leaking lifeline that connects – or divides, depending on how you view it – the Valley from the rest of the country. Two separate realities exist on either side of the tunnel, two entirely different sets of perceptions. And two terrible stereotypes congeal to face each other.

To the rest of India – exposed to an unrelieved diet of militant kidnapping, killings, bomb blasts and Pakistan forays, together with the BJP abetted Pandit problem – the face of the Kashmiri is now dissolving into a blurred, featureless mask. He has become a secessionist-cum-terrorist-cum-fundamentalist traitor. An image exemplified in the April 30 "*India Today*" covers and its story. In Kashmir, on the other hand, the face of India crystallising into focus is that of a weapon-wielding oppressor a *darinda*, a beast, not human. Both sides need to obliterate contradictions and erect an Enemy. For how else can wars be waged?

This level of reality – of rigid and false polarisation rests on and is fed by a base where all facts have fled and absolute confusion prevails; in fact neither level can exist without each other.

Each day in Srinagar, a hundred rumours bloom, circulate, fade and are reborn. So one moment, Captain Rashid, a leading Jammu and Kashmir Liberation Front figure is killed, the next moment he's resurrected and someone takes his place. Yaseen Malik, Chief Commander of the Front is caught; then he's dead; then he got caught but escaped; then he got caught and was injured but didn't escape. And finally he didn't get caught. But injured. Not too badly however.

This atmosphere makes for perfect conspiracy creating conditions. It's a secretary with the Jammu and Kashmir government who believe that the J&K Highway was deliberately not cleared for two weeks from end March in order to starve the Valley of essential supplies.

Television, then is seen as an utterly one-sided government mouth-piece and to even the brief visitor to the Valley the yawning discrepancy between Doordarshan's [ITV] view from new Delhi and the ground level reality in Kashmir is evident. The Governor's New Delhi utterances that there are no shortages may convince the rest of the country. It's little more difficult to do so in a lower middle class home where the children have had no milk for eight days, where the son has been foraging the slopes of the Shankaracharya hill for edible shrubs because there are no vegetables and the family has subsisted on rice and *dal* for the last ten days.

Indefinite, uninterrupted curfew is an insidious process and can have two effects – it can break people's backs. Or it can put their backs up. It can also transform the back being pushed to the wall, as the sense of beleaguering is driven deeper and deeper, to recesses increasingly out of reach. The MLA the people vote for the God they pray to, touch them at very different levels.

Only the day before corruption deprived the Kashmiri youth of a medical seat, an engineering seat, a job; he was denied his right to education, he was denied his right to employment. Yesterday, large-scale rigging deprived him of his rightful vote. Today, he sees his '*Kashmiriat*' – his political, social and cultural identity – under siege. Tomorrow, the faith will be in peril. Today's *Tahreek*, (movement) is tomorrow's *Jehad*. And then, beyond blaming our neighbour, the administration and the army's active part in this process will have to be acknowledged.

An old man, eyes blazing behind thick cataract lenses, arms flailing, shrieks of sacrilege and demands to know who has the right to stand between a Muslim and his God. An elderly woman of the mohalla had died and her *janaza* was prevented, this after the necessary permission had been obtained from the administration. Further into the locality, past crowds so dense and distraught that mobility is practically impossible, a group of women is nearly hysterical. They were lined up and, at gun point, made to say *Jai*

Mata over and over again. In the mosque next door, the search parties had trooped in, boots on, pulled down the loudspeaker, battered it out of shape; in some homes, shards of glass, in another the study which housed a collection of scared scriptures is a holy mess of scattered papers.

A fine white film of flour still coats many homes where rice was mixed with sugar, masala and coal – all upturned on the same floor. With curfew on there's no question of replenishing supplies. In any case, till mid-April curfew has prevented people from collecting their March rations.

Scorched earth searches like these leave a long and damaging trail. And this based on the little I saw in some 20-odd houses in less than three hours.

A toothless woman, old and wrinkled, weeps because she was robbed of all her money, Rs. 87 and she was made to kill and hand over the last two chickens in her home. Another woman rushes in to produce a pale blue ring box, worn with age and now empty. She last saw her ring being slipped into a soldier's matchbox. For a mentally-retarded woman who lives along with her daughter, the nightmare has not switched off. She babbles on and on, her eyes dilated in fear, as a neighbour tries to soothe her. A new mother, her five-day-old tiny baby in the arms of her mother, lies groaning and weeping. She'd had a cesarian delivery and was made to walk down two flights of stairs, rounded up with other women in the courtyard below, even as her husband who lives in another locality and who was visiting his wife and newborn child, was taken away by the army. Who knows why, or where, or when he will return.

And what about the men. Many were picked up, as the now Jammu-based national press duly reported, a number of terrorists included. But minus names and identification who is sure? The men who remained has a similar tale to tell, one I'd heard at the mini-Secretariat in the city earlier in the day, where there was an uproar among the staff who were outraged that their J&K government employee identity cards had been flung aside as they were subjected to the same treatment as their neighbours were.

All men with beards were dubbed terrorists and those without were told that they'd just crossed over from Pakistan and

had shaved in order to disguise themselves. A number of residents had their beards forcibly shorn with scissors. So, it was any which way you were sunk if you were a Kashmiri Muslim.

The residents of Batmaloo were searched thrice that day, by para-military forces. The first and third time there were orderly searches. The army search was the second one, the savage one. Let them conduct searches, the people say. But what was this?

And it's easier to focus on scattered debris – a broken plastic flower, fragments of a home in the city of legendary gardens; a smashed transistor, the very last and only link to a world beyond shut doors and closed windows – than to meet anyone's eye, alone answer the question. For there is little to say aloud.

I'm not so sure if these men were trained to shoot three-year-olds who don't know that curfew relaxation is over.

And perhaps those who play war games with words on their PC screens, thundering "no soft options" from new Delhi, so far from the Valley – where the smell of fear clings to your clothes – should take in the view from the front.

Sunday Review, Times of India, New Delhi, April 29, 1990.

Kashmir: Hedging the Bets

Pankaj Pachauri

It was the first Friday in months that curfew had been lifted in Srinagar city. Yet even on February 23, the shops remained closed. The people, however, emerged. Their hands in the air-making victory signs and waving multi-coloured flags of various militant organisations-tens of thousands of youth, women and children came out on the streets. Singing religious verses from the Quran and raising slogans for freedom, the processions snaked through the posh Residency Road to the United Nations' Observer's office, to submit a memorandum seeking plebiscite in Kashmir. Some were clad in white death-shrouds, and the eerie refrain that echoed was: *Al jehad gao, maro ya mar jao* (Sing for the holy war, kill or be killed).

Governor Jagmohan was in Delhi that day, discussing the plan outlay for the state. His adviser, Ved Marwah, was in his Srinagar office, clearing various files for the construction of schools and bridges for outlying towns. Paramilitary personnel were keeping an unagitated eye on the demonstrators, even as the militants kept their protests disciplined. In the evenings the bureaucrats prepared an "all normal" report for the press briefing; there had been no instances of police firings, deaths or tension. The administration then decided to lift the curfew altogether.

There was much more to be read into the day's events than seemed apparent. The underlying message was that after a month of Central rule, and an immediate clampdown to stem the rot, governor Jagmohan was down to evolving his long-term strategy. The unique formula he had decided to adopt was: permit peaceful protests no matter how unpalatable the slogneering; but at the same time give no quarter to terrorism. Also, play the game by the rule of the law. Hence, no knee-jerk raids and encounters after each act of violence, and no glorification of extremists through special treatment. As an aide to the governor said: "What is wrong in political demonstrations? They happen all the time in Delhi's Boat Club. It's only their flags which display Kalashnikovs. But if the people do, that will be dealt with differently."

Jagmohan backed this tough-and-liberal strategy with covert political initiatives. Feelers were sent to the People's League leader, Shabbir Shah, to enter into a political dialogue. Shabbir Shah, an important militant leader now in jail, in turn conveyed that no dialogue would be fruitful unless all militant leaders were taken into confidence.

The last two months have seen more than 115 people, including a dozen paramilitary personnel, killed. And though a police crackdown-including firing-forced curfew violators indoors, the Government was making no headway in busting armed groups. No important militant had been captured or eliminated. Moreover, the police firings were being used to generate rumours of massacred and genocides; and were being exploited by even those like former chief minister Farooq Abdullah to regain their shattered credibility.

The new approach was also the result of realisation that the state could not be administered through the gun. Things are

extremely serious for the militants enjoy immense popular support, and the people treat their word as law. To celebrate the Shab-e-Meraj festival, the militants called for a "temporary ceasefire"; this was observed. Even when curfew was relaxed, one call from the militants and every shop would refuse to open its shutters.

Government departments have also been feeling the brunt of this militancy. After Srinagar station director Lassa Koul was gunned down, the entire Doordarshan [T.V.] staff resigned, returning to work only after an assurance was given that there would be no meddling in the local newscasts. Srinagar airport has only two permanent employees now the rest are on deputation and change every fortnight. The Jammu & Kashmir policemen are nervous about the sword of social boycott dangling over their heads. Says a senior IPS [Indian Police Service] officer: "But for a few areas, the militants dictate their terms. Either by consent or force." Now they've even declared that Friday be observed as the weekly holiday instead of Sunday.

What is even more disturbing is the paralysis of the judicial system. The fear of militants has seen to it, that there is no attorney general to plead government cases, that public prosecutors have quit their jobs. As have counsels and legal advisers of about 150 government departments. Slowly, work in both the high and lower courts is grinding to a halt. In fact, it was the 'Jammu & Kashmir Bar Association' which last fortnight appealed to the UN to intervene and "secure the right of selfdetermination of the Kashmiri people". It also demanded that a team be sent to probe human rights violations.

Aggravating matters was Dr. Farooq Abdullah. Though the rule of his party, the National Conference, [pro-Congress] was marked with oppressive measures and human rights violation, Dr. Farooq in a statement called "Jagmohsn's rule genocidal". Moreover, forgetting his assertions that no power could separate Kashmir from India, he termed Kashmir a watan (country) and called for an inquiry on an international level.

The [J&K] assembly dissolution exposed the true face of his partymen. Former minister, Abdul Salam Deva, met leaders from the Valley who decided to disband the party and convert it into the Plebiscite Front which fought for self-determination under Sheikh

Abdullah for 22 years before 1975. They also directed the party's cadre to work with the Kashmir Liberation Front activists.

But a political dialogue with the Centre does not figure on the agenda of the militants. Emboldened by the public support, they wish to press for a plebiscite. The other major difficulty is that none of the 26 organisations has a clear-cut leadership which can be approached for a dialogue. And in the present atmosphere, no one will come forward to negotiate lest he be alienated from the others.

But at least Jagmohan and his trouble-shooters seem to have discovered the existence of a political train in the troubled valley. What they need to do is find the rails to put it back on. However, the process of identifying those rails, at the moment, threatens to be a long-drawn and agonising one.

India Today, March 15, 1990.

Valley Under Curfew

Mani Shankar Aiyar

".....It is upon this valley and this people that the Governor and his administration have launched a war of attrition. For there is nothing sophisticated or selective about their hand to flush out the terrorists. Everyone in the valley – man, woman or child, of every faith and every political persuasion – is indiscriminately the target of continuous curfew, of Draconian dragnet and swinging security operations. The administration seems animated by the quite mistaken belief that if they smother, smash and starve the Valley into submission, the people will yield up the terrorists in their midst and exhausted by the severity of the security onslaught, return like lambs to the strait and narrow.....

There is little or no food in Srinagar. Infants are going without milk. Life-saving drugs are virtually unavailable. Since December 15 that is for much of the last 4 months curfew has been almost continuous, lifted only for a few brief hours earlier on cold, wintry mornings and imposed before the commencement of normal working day. Inevitably, the economy has collapsed. With no one able to go out to work, manufacturing activity is at a standstill,

whether it be of the exquisite crafts for which the Valley is justly renowned or in the lager factories. Shops open, only to be quickly shuttered again. The banking system has folded up. The post office neither despatches nor delivers letters. Telephones are on the blink. Neither cargo nor passengers can be booked. The export trade has dried up. And no tourists – the holiday-makers on whom the livelihood of lakhs of Kashmiris depends – are anywhere in sight.

The Governor does not answer, but his administration's action speak for themselves; yes without Kashmiris. And, yes, without too many Muslims. For, of the six new Directors General of Police appointed, none are Muslims: of the 19 new Inspectors General of Police appointed, only 2 are Muslims; none of the Deputy Commissioners in the Valley is a Kashmiri; nor are any of the heads of department in the Secretariat.

Mid-day, Bombay May 2, 1990

Kashmir: "Shadows of Death"

Harinder Baweja

Everywhere there's pain. There's darkness everywhere. The Valley had lost its magic, its mystique. It stretches like a pale shadow of its familiar verdant and joyful self. Summertime was, when its people welcomed droves of tourists and sent truckfulls of fruit to distant destinations. This summer, too, they're busy: counting the dead. They display and eerie defiance. A people learning to live with death.

Lal Chowk is Sringar's nerve-centre. Once, in summer, hundreds of tourists flocked here. Today Lal Chowk presents the silence of the graveyard. The shops rarely open. They smell musty. Piles of embroidered phirans and shawls lie unsold. Crates of cherries and dry fruit beckon, but there are no buyers. There are no tourists and the Kashmiri's overriding concern today is not to sell almonds, but to buy vegetables.

Abdul Hamid, a student, ate wild grass and it only made him more determined: things can't get worse. Tortured bodies are recovered routinely from street corners: the bleeding are found lying

by the roadside. There are daily gunbattles. Militant ambushed. Retaliatory police raids. Processions that inevitably run into edgy policemen. The odd protestor left behind in the debris of the day's clash. But people learn to cope. Mir Ahmed, 67, seldom ventures out. When he does, he makes it a point to keep a nearly folded piece of paper bearing his name and address in his pocket. Why die nameless?

With the markets closed, the mosques have become 'departmental stores'. There is food for the needy, medicines for the injured and neatly stacked piles of shrouds to bury the dead. Death, it seems, inspires the living. The 'local attraction' the 'tourist spot' - if it may so be called-is not the Dal Lake, but the Idgah. It's to the martyrs' section of this sprawling graveyard, where several top militants lie buried, that the parents come, dragging their children. The women beat their breasts, the men huddle together. "Tauba, Allah, yeh kaisa Hindustan hai," (Oh, God! what kind of India is this!) they chorus. An old man digging a grave looks up and mutters: "Two to four bodies are brought here everyday."

Some of these are of the 'warriors', some of innocent bystanders. Ashfaq Ahmed, a Kashmir Liberation Federation 'area commander', rests here as does 18 - month-old Saqib Ahmed Bashir who fell to CRPF bullets. Fear, anguish, insecurity bind the mourners. "Was Saqib Ahmed a terrorist?" everyone asks.

The graveyard is more than a meeting point. It is the altar at which new warriors are initiated. Defiant mothers point to the graves and ask their children: "What do we want?" -- "*Azadi*," [Liberation] the toddlers chorus. The men volunteer to dig the graves, and many want to book places in advance. The closer one's grave to Ashfaq and Saqib, the better.

The ice-cream and fruit vendors do more business at the Idgah than at the Lake, now a desolate pond, the 600-odd houseboats displaying 'vacant' signs and the shikaras bobbing aimlessly. And the rows of hotels facing the lake are paramilitary 'forces' fortresses, sand bags lining the window sills and balconies. The demise of tourism, a Rs 600-crore-a-year industry, has been followed by the destruction of the Rs 18 crore apple business. Handicrafts and carpets are finished as well.

The deathly silence enshrouding Srinagar is broken occasionally by staccato gunfire, or an Indian Airlines jet. Flights come in nearly empty, bringing bureaucrats and policemen. The airport resembles a military base. The taxi drivers are out of business. Ashraf Ahmed, a young driver, came into the airport at 4 in the morning. The first flight landed at 9.50 a.m., but brought no business. "Most of them are quickly huddled into convoys and driven away," he says. Finally at 3.15 p.m. he has a passenger. A Kashmiri Pandit, who has come to wind up his carpet business. "Our buyers have taken us off their computer lists," he says.

Most hotels have been requisitioned by the Government to house the forces and employees brought in with the durbar move. The streets are deserted. The signboards tell a story. Travel Corporation of..., State Bank of....-the amputation of 'India' is endless. The pathway opposite Islamia College is lined with slippers and shoes. Mementos of may 21, the day the CRPF opened fire on the mourners accompanying Maulvi Farooq's body, killings 53. Today the footwear of the fleeing mourners makes for a pilgrimage spot.

Paradoxically, the misery translates not into a yearning for peace and conciliation, but into reinforced hatred of the State. The women bitterly complain about the CRPF ransacking their homes. Even despoiling their food stocks. "Did they hope to find a mujahid [Freedom-fighter] in my kitchen? We are all mujahids. so what if I don't have a Kalashnikov?" asks Rafika, a Rainawari housewife. The children talk of Kalashnikovs, and separatist passion overtakes logic. "I don't mind if he is killed, take him," says Ashraf Sheikh, an emporium owner, pushing his infant son forward. His wife nods assent.

The mood on the other side of the fence reflects the same desperation. Rarely does a day pass when the security forces do not lose a comrade. Harassed by militants using innocent people as shields, abused by the people and hounded by the Government to deliver peace, theirs is a hopeless plight, " You say we are killing children. I'll give you a pistol, can you shoot a child?" asks a harried CRPF deputy commandant. The jawans have not seen their families for months.

They continue to fight, nevertheless. Each day brings another confrontation, another ambush, a few more dead, a lot more hatred. And the shadows of death lengthen menacingly.

India Today, July 31, 1990.

Inside Kashmir

Amit Prakash

On a wet and chilly April morning in Tankipura, a downtown area of Srinagar, the sight of a group of young men pushing two handcarts laden with not-so-fresh looking vegetables was the only sign of human activity other than the alert, gun toting jawans patrolling the near empty streets, their index fingers permanently fixed on the trigger. The previous day, just like the day before and the one before that, had witnessed a day-long curfew – a common phenomenon since January last year- but this was one of three rare days in Srinagar and most of the Kashmir Valley when curfew had been relaxed for the day.

"Saab, these boys are not regular vegetable vendors," said the taxi driver with a wry grin, "I know three of them personally and they are B. Sc, first divisioners. They are not selling those vegetables for a living, but are members of the local relief committee. They are returning from the wholesaler and will sell them in their mohalla at cost price. You see, even though the curfew has been relaxed for the day, nothing is certain. One minor incident of stone throwing and curfew will be clamped again, and nobody wants to get stranded." Just then he pulls the cab over to the side of the road to make way for a passing army convoy, and once it has passed his face turns purple with rage; "Haramzade!" (bastards) he mutters under his breath and spits out of the window before moving on.

Curfew has become a way of life in the Valley, and even when it is relaxed there is hardly any semblance of normalcy. The air is thick with uncertainty and the fear of a possible shoot-out. Most local economic activity has virtually come to a grinding halt resulting in severe financial strain on a predominantly poor populace. Among the worst hit are the small shopkeepers, daily wage-earners, auto-rickshaw and taxi drivers not just those who

are dependent on tourism, but even the ones who cater to the needs of the local population.

Yet there are not many among them who come out to complain about the scarcity and its consequent hardship. Instead, the only complaint is that the curfew is being used as a weapon of intimidation through forced economic deprivation aimed at breaking the back of the ongoing "freedom struggle". "Your Indian government thinks it can dampen our spirits by starving us," says Azeem Qureshi, a petty shopkeeper, from behind a partially open shutter, "but you are wrong. We are willing to starve and get shot, for it will be a dignified death which is better than suffering the humiliation of being slaves of India. Every pang of hunger can only make us braver, the rest is in Allah's hands".

Ghulam Rasool, a school teacher puts it differently; "The prolonged spell of curfew has reduced Kashmir to a prison, for we are all in a way under house arrest. We are the prisoners of the Indian para-military forces."

Walking through the streets of Srinagar during curfew hours is like visiting city of the dead. Seemingly lifeless mongrels that lie asleep along the bare streets lift their heads slowly to take a look, the curious expressions on their faces seem to ask, "Excuse me, but should you be here?" The eerie silence is broken by the menacing whirl of a distant helicopter, and as you lift your head to try and locate it, a rifle cocks behind you and then a shout, "*Khabardar, kaun hai!*" sends a chill down your spine, and an extra spurt of adrenaline. A group of CRP jawans demand curfew passes and identity cards. On being satisfied one of them asks, "*Jaan pyari nahin kya? By chance shoot-out ho gaya to hereo se zero ban jao ge.*" (Don't you value your life? You will be reduced from hero to zero in case of a shoot-out). The curfew pass and the press ID card are a reporter's most valuable possessions in Kashmir; without them mobility would be actually hampered.

On March 1, 1990 the security forces opened fire at two places, at Zakura in Hazratbal, and at the Badgam bypass in which as many as 30 innocent people were killed. The first was a panic reaction by army men as they opened fire on a large mob which tried to hoist their flags atop their armoured personnel carrier. In the other incident a CRPF contingent went berserk when one of their

colleagues fell prey to the militants' bullets. By the time they could pull themselves together the militants had escaped, but scores of innocents were caught in the return of fire as the infuriated security men shot anything that moved. Among the dead was a family of three, a man, woman and their nine-year-old daughter. That evening the AIR and Doordarshan [TV] announced that "one jawan and ten militants had been killed", further fuelling a smouldering fire and hardening the feelings against the Indian State.

"That is no way to treat innocent civilians," says Rashid Ahmed (not his real name), a deputy director in the state government. On top of that your media calls them militants! It is shame in India. How on earth does a nine-year old girl become terrorist ?" His deep-set eyes search your soul for an answer, his hands tremble as he gesticulates and his lips twitch with suppressed rage as he pauses between sentences. "If you hate us so much then why not give us independence and stop killing our innocent brothers and sisters? Allow us to live with peace and dignity. Are we asking for too much?"

The Illustrated Weekly of India, Bombay, April 29, 1990

The Valley Reacts

Prem Shanker Jha

Srinagar looked like an occupied city.

Except for 10 days in February, dusk-to-dawn curfew has been imposed on the city since January 20. When there is trouble, the curfew is extended to cover all but the first few hours of the day.

There is an unprecedented degree of mobilisation of the people of the valley against rule by "India". Small children scream "Azadi" at you.....

Increasingly, the Muslim population of the valley is reacting as a unit to each and every story of police "Zulum"....

.....How has Kashmir gone from sullen acquiescence to full blown insurgency in such a short time? Everyone was unanimous in saying that is happened on January 21, 1990, when the police

opened fire with automatic weapons on a procession of demonstrators in a narrow street in the Gawakadal area of Srinagar. Estimates of the numbers killed range from 20-odd (government figures), to 50-plus (according to Kashmiri journalists), to 200 (say the militants). But the numbers are immaterial. In a valley that has never known such indiscriminate killing, Gawakadal has become the Kashmiri's Jallianwala Bagh.

....So long as the CRPF are out on the streets, there will be an unending supply of martyrs and opinion against India will continue to harden. The option that the government is trying to exercise, of first restoring law and order, boosting the morale of the administration and the police, and then infiltrating the militants' network and isolating them, does not exist.

The harsh truth is that there are only two ways in which Kashmir can remain a part of India. The first is if most of its Muslim population is driven out. The second is with the consent of its Muslim population.

All those who bitterly speak of taking "a hardline" in Kashmir are either incredibly stupid or incredibly brutal. For, the hard line will escalate violence until New Delhi is forced to adopt a scorched-earth policy.

The uprising in Kashmir is proof that government after government has failed to live up to the lofty ideals enshrined in India's Constitution. We can try to shift the blame by saying that every Kashmiri Muslim is a Pakistani at heart. But this is simply not true. Even today... the vast majority of Kashmiri Muslims are not communal.

The truth is that in the last 40 years, Kashmir has been integrated economically with the rest of India, but has been treated a political pariah.

Economic forces have also been at work in the 1980s to undermine Kashmir's tenuous political bonds with the rest of India. In this decade, a new generation of educated Kashmiri Muslims arrived in the job market, and found that there were no jobs.

....Every central government outpost in Kashmir was overwhelmingly staffed with Kashmiri Hindus. To a young Kashmiri Muslim, the prospect of entering the troubled communal waters of

'Hindustan' in search of a job, with no friends or relatives to speak for them or shelter them, was forbidding. They stayed in the valley, nursing their discontent, until they heard the militants' call to arms.

The Sunday Observer, New Delhi, April 14, 1990.

Srinagar Today is Dead City

The Insaf Party expresses its grave concern at the present situation in the Kashmir Valley. Today the people stand totally alienated from our national polity and without emotional integration and with unrelenting repression, the constitutional form has been drained of all meaning and substance.

Srinagar today is a dead city, a city under siege, a city under occupation, whose people have been under curfew for practically 3 months. In indiscriminate search and arrest, hundreds have been killed and detained. Denied means of livelihood and tourism being at a standstill, many people are penniless. Meat and vegetables are not available; rice is in diminishing supply. Some are on the brink of starvation. There is an acute shortage of medicines. Essential services like electric supply and telephone are erratic. Radio and TV are closed down. Postal and banking services do not exist. Public transport has ceased to ply.

Political parties and leaders have become irrelevant and the vacuum has been filled by militant organisations whose call is law. Every minute of curfew is adding to the anger and bitterness of the people and making reconciliation increasingly difficult.

The Insaf Party is of the view that Governor Jagmohan is the chosen instrument of the BJP to implement its diabolical plan for aggravating and exploiting the Kashmir situation for demolishing the Secular State and establishing the Hindu Rashtra. The essential components of this plan are to demand the abrogation of Article 370 of the Constitution, to support repressive measures calculated to provoke the masses and to stoke the fires of secessionism, to engineer the exodus of non-Muslims from the valley, and finally to launch virulent propaganda against the Muslim Kashmiris and the

Muslim Indians in general. The objective is to generate a wave of Hindu backlash which the secular order, notwithstanding, shall carry the BJP to ultimate power.

In pursuance of this plan, Governor Jagmohan is trying to starve and shoot the people of the valley into submission, silence and even non-Muslim from the valley by promoting a fear psychosis and by spreading reports of an unending crackdown and has put the rest of the people of the valley under house arrest.

This conspiracy, in which the people of the valley, Hindus and Muslims, are no more than cannon-fodder, must be defeated.

But first normal life must be restored; the life, property and honour of the people must be respected; their human rights and fundamental rights must be safeguarded.

The Insaaf Party demands that: as a matter of priority, curfew must be withdrawn totally or at least limited to night hours, the security forces should be withdrawn from populated areas and concentrated on strategic installations and highways and on the Indo-Pakistan border and the Line of Actual Control and internal policing should be done by the J&K Police; essential articles of mass consumption should be supplied to the valley and for this purpose the jammu-Srinagar highway should be kept open at all cost; essential public services should be run by Kashmiri personnel as far as possible.

On the judicial plane, a Commission of Inquiry with 3 retired or sitting judges of Supreme Court should be set up to inquire into all allegations' of atrocities. Radio Kashmir and Srinagar Doordarshan should broadcast authentic news which commands credibility.

Syed Shahabuddin, President *Insaaf Party*. Statement issued in New Delhi April 14, 1990.

Your India, Not Mine

Nalini Singh

As a media person you take some unusual measures to get information, or the one TV shot you are after. But few plays leave

you wondering, even shaken. And finally they become a symbol of the event.

During course of two hours in Srinagar, 9 p.m. - 11 p.m., on a recent night in May (my first day in the city for TV shooting), I took off and replaced my bindi about 20 times, once every 5 minutes.

In a hired ambassador car taxi, and with a local person, we drove from Residency Road via the inner city to the outskirts to contact person who were willing to be interviewed the next day.

As we neared a picket or CRPF or BSF security personnel, the driver slowed down, and the jawan stopped us briefly to check the curfew passes. Upto this point the bindi was on, but I covered my head with a veil out of respect for local sentiment.

The next halt was in a congested mid-town residential locality, a lane of brick facades. As we approached the street, the driver flicked on the light inside the car so that the occupants could be identified from the outside.

As soon as the light went on, my contact advised, "If you don't mind, take the bindi off," he vanished into a house. At ease, I plucked the bindi off, and I recalled that a journalist friend had warned in Delhi, "The *sari* and *bindi* are red rags. If you want to do any TV shooting, go local."

Go local, I already am, I thought, sporting a loose *shalwar-qameez*. So going local only meant removing the bindi, and holding it in my hand while the inhabitants of the mohalla took a look from their window ledges.

It was a poignant moment because I was being passed through the 'fundamentalist' filter, not the filter of credibility, which is usually applied to media persons. And this in Kashmir renowned for its secular, sufi traditions.

Then the mohalla contact waved us on, and in the darkness of the next lane, I groped for the *bindi* and restored it to the forehead. Then the next curfew pass check, the next mohalla, and the mobile *bindi*.

To demands of Srinagar on this dot epitomised for me two formidable realities in Kashmir today - 'separateness' to Kashmir from India has been nurtured in the public mind for 43 years

through unremitting repetition; and fundamentalists (and watchful neighbours?) have interpreted this separateness to the youth in terms of the Holy War.

The combined effect explodes in sentence such as the following heard commonly from Kashmir's young. "We were never a part of India. We became associated with India only because we wanted to build roads, hospitals, etc. Even the Assembly was only to connect the mohallas to Srinagar. It doesn't mean that we are Indian."

As I listen, the thought races through my mind that these young men, 15 to 30 years, actually believe that their affiliation with the Indian Union is absolutely ephemeral.

All of them were born after '47/48', and none of them has direct experience of the days when the instrument of accession was negotiated. Their parents did, because by eye-witness accounts, countless people attended meetings addressed by Pt. Nehru, Sheikh Abdullah, and one where General Cariappa was also present.

I found that a faint frown of anxiety (?) passed quickly over the older faces when the room filled with younger persons' cries "Indian must get out. We want independence. *Azadi*." Chin to chest cavity, the father or uncle didn't join loudly the denunciation of "India".

What has happened to cause the younger generation to reject the link with the India Union? How is it that over the last 20 years the belief has hardened that Kashmir is "separate", that it will decide if it wants *azadi*, or merger with India or Pakistan?

While this belief was hardening north of the Pir Panjal, an equal and opposite process was going on south of the pass. "From Kashmir to Kanyakumari India is one" said the DAVP posters, official media, the mainstream press, and we internalised this message because it was consistent with our polity. Without nagging doubts, most of us became emotionally integrated with Kashmir.

So it was with disbelief, and a sense of betrayal that I observed how carefully Kashmiri youth picked their way through a conversation to emphasis. "Your India, your parliament, your employment policy, your cities."

Clearly, this angry (militant?) section of the population in Kashmir is not saying this for its effect on you, or to break the country. So, what has caused this gulf in perception;

Lies, I'm afraid, possibly another country's industrious efforts and of course maldevelopment. But lies! Lies told to the people of Kashmir regarding their 'separateness' from India constitutionally, politically, ethnically, emotionally. Or lies told to us outside Kashmir?

I have it on authority from somebody who has dug out the speeches of Kashmiri leaders from 1950 onward that the leaders spoke in three voices: one in Delhi; one in the Kashmir Valley within reach of All India Radio; and one in villages and smaller towns. The last set have been described as seditious in the extreme.,

On the other hand, was enough done to inform the rest of the country about the actual events in Kashmir over the decades?

Not surprisingly the "boys" speak today with AK-47s' the angry Kashmiri youth whiplashes "Indian brutality and dominance", but once in a way, when you are alone in Kashmir heed the quick whisper:

"These auto-rickshaw drivers are short of cash because there's no business. That's why they shouted at you. Actually you are a sister." a taxi driver in Srinagar.

"There's hurt and pain in Kashmir. You have turned a blind eye to what has been happening here for years. But does that mean necessarily, that we want to split from India? I can't talk. Take my tears to V.P.Singh," a professor in a small town, as we talk alone amongst Deodar trees.

The Indian Express, New Delhi, June 10, 1990.

Try Jagmohan

The emotional links which bound people of the valley today stand severed, thanks to rigged elections, the imposition of a spineless playboy, Farooq Abdullah, as Chief Minister, the

distortions in the secular order exemplified by the Ayodhya dispute and the Bhagalpur genocide, the denial of adequate development resources and finally the region of terror unleashed by Jagmohan.

The Insaf Party is of the considered view that in order to save Kashmir, steps must be taken for safeguarding the fundamental rights of the people, normalising the economy of the valley and accelerating its development, in order to create the necessary climate for a revival of the political process.

The 'Insaf Party' appeals to the PUCL, PUDR, the Independent Initiative, the Initiative on Kashmir and the secular forces in all political parties to join hands in defending the human, fundamental and democratic rights of people of the valley, in demanding highpower judicial probe in the massacres and other allegations of massive violation of human rights, in setting up a People's Tribunal to try Mr. Jagmohan for crimes against the people, in upholding the secular order and strengthening its foundations and in mobilising the people of Democracy and Secularism which alone can, if at all, regenerate a civilised polity in the valley, based not only on the acquiescence but the free will of the people;

From The *Insaf Party resolution*, New Delhi, June 9, 1990.

Stop Repression, Start Dialogue

A Seven-member team of the Indian People's Front (IPF) led by Front President, Nagbhusan Patnaik and including IPF MP Rameshwar Prasad, General Secretaries Dipankar Bhattacharya, Akhilendra Partap Singh and Ramji Ray, vice-president of the IPF's Bihar Unit Taqui Rahim and central Spokesman of the CPI (ML) (Liberation) Sankar Mitra, is currently visiting the valley to get a first hand feel of the situation in the State. Over the last three days, the team has visited several areas in Srinagar city and in the adjoining Districts of Baramulla, Anantanag and Kupwara, and talked with hundreds of people from different walks of life. A report:

Everywhere we went we saw tell-tale signs of ruthless state repression. Everybody we met greeted us with agonising accounts of the harrowing experience they have undergone in the 127-days long region of terror of Mr. Jagmohan from 19th January to 25 May. We have no words to condemn this fascist brutality. We are now still more convinced that the former Governor-*cum*-present Rajya Sabha MP must immediately be put to trial for all his criminal acts in Kashmir. This is important not only for the purpose of resumption of the political process in the State, but also for the preservation of the very sanctity of all our democratic institutions and values.

We are also highly disturbed to find that there has hardly been any change in the Govt's Kashmir Policy and its execution under the new Governor. The old scenario of incessant curfew, ruthless raids, torturous interrogations, molestation and rape of women, illegal detention, custodial deaths and 'encounter' killings continue unabated. And with no let-up in repression, there can be and is absolutely no move towards any restoration of the political process. We call upon the V.P. Singh Govt. at the Centre to abandon the strategy of State terror and to initiate sincere attempt towards a political solution of the Kashmir question. The curfew-detention-encounter Raj must stop and all sections of the Kashmiri people must be provided with a congenial political environment where they can express their real feelings and aspiration and the Govt of India must give a patient hearing to the popular Kashmiri voice.

We have observed that the present unrest in Kashmir valley is backed by tremendous popular sanction and involvement and it is entirely wrong to dismiss it as a handiwork of a group of subversives aided and abetted by Pakistan. It is also mischievous to take a communal view of the movement. The overwhelming majority of the Kashmir people we met appeared quite resolute to maintain the essentially secular character of the upsurge, even in the face of serious communal provocation from different quarters.

We sincerely appreciate the genuine grievances and aspirations of the Kashmir people and fully sympathise with them in their present struggle against the mighty Indian State which has bared its ugly, brutal face in a non-holds-barred bid to crush the popular unrest. As part of our revolutionary-democratic commitment we have always opposed the Indian Govt's coercive measures on the Kashmiri people and will continue to do all we can

to mobilise the democratic opinion in India against this State terrorism and for a negotiated political solution.

At the same time, we would appeal to the Kashmir leadership to rely on mass mobilization and popular democratic methods and to show the necessary political sagacity and flexibility to utilise every opportunity to negotiate directly with the Centre. We would also call upon them to distinguish between the Indian State and the Indian people, between the Indian reactionaries and the democratic forces. The need of hour is to forge a fighting democratic unity of the broad Indian people against the repressive Indian State, The broad working masses of India are also waging a protracted war for real freedom and democracy and there is surely enough room for a positive cooperation between the Kashmiri people's movement for their identity and political rights and the broader revolutionary quest of the Indian people for a really humane and democratic, secular and federal social order and political system.

Dipankar Bhattacharya, Organising General Secretary, IPF.
Srinagar, June 21, 1990.

Not by Force

Kewal Verma

We as a nation have begun to genuinely believe that Pakistan is at the root of all our troubles-terrorism and secessionism in Kashmir and Punjab and communal riots in the rest of the country. Hence, the solution lies in teaching Pakistan a lesson, but who is responsible for terrorism in Assam? China? If so, then declare a war against China.

We are nation of self-deceivers. We have no ability to do a rigorous socio-political analysis and identify the real sources of our troubles. Our intellectual lethargy and ideological differences tend to put the entire blame on outsiders for all our problems.

It is not to say that India has no enemies. But these adversaries do not create problems, they only fish in our troubled waters and compound our troubles.

Did Pakistan start...The Ram Janambhoomi-Babri Masjid controversy and organise Ram Shila *pooja* all over India? Similarly, did Pakistani propaganda turn Kashmir Muslims en masse against India? Kashmiri Muslims opted to join India in the belief that this country would remain secular. They acceded to Gandhi's India, Nehru's India and not to Golwalkar's India, not to Shayama Prasad Mukherjee's India. When India is increasingly turning communal, that trust is betrayed. Only a secular India can keep Kashmir within it democratically. A communalised India can keep Kashmir only by force.

A contemporary magazine concludes its reportage on Kashmir: "In Kashmir--where the Centre has invested some Rs. 70,000 crores in subsidies, not to speak of the blood of Indian soldiers in two wars--the nation faces, what is perhaps the gravest challenge to the idea on which its integrity is moored. There are no soft options left. And temporary revers must not be allowed to invert the process of sustained reclamation. The country can no longer afford to behave like a tenant on a notice to vacate somebody else's property."

If this is the attitude we have towards Kashmir, then God help this 'country'. For this policy does not spell out the ways of winning the minds of the Kashmir people.

The dangers of such a Kashmir policy are commanded by the talk that Pakistan is engineering communal riots in India... If not countered, it will make every Muslim a suspect and people will rally around the BJP's slogan: "Save Bharat Mata, Hindusim is the solution."

Muslim India, New Delhi, August 1990

Startling Scenario of Kashmir

NEW DELHI - The paralysis hits you in the gut the moment you step out of the near empty flight. The once-bustling airport lounge is virtually deserted. The arrival area gives the impression of a military airbase, with armed troops and vehicles

waiting to escort visitors, mostly officers of the Government, uniformed armed forces personnel or their families. The ubiquitous, glib tour operators and hotel-house-boat agents are no longer there to lure tourists to the now empty hotels. But a few miles out on the road, and the silence of the graveyard can suddenly yield to a cacophony of war cries. Both the silence and the commotion testify to one common fact—the state of siege under which the militant movement holds the Kashmir Valley.

Over the decades the ordinary Kashmiri had become inured to the phenomenon of latent political discontent frequently spilling into the streets. But in the past few weeks, he has not just been a witness, he has also been a participant in the protest movement, and increasingly with a new spirit of defiance. "In the past you fired one shot in the air and they disappeared. Today you kill one demonstrator, then a second, and yet the mob keeps coming at you. Finally you withdraw," says an exasperated Central Reserve Police Force (CRPF) official. A veteran of many pitched battles with mobs in Assam, Gujrat and Punjab. "People have lost their fear. This is a definitat new breed of Kashmiri," says another senior officials.

The "new, defiant breed" signalled its arrival by hitting the streets of Srinagar and other major valley towns including Anantnaga, Sopore and Baramula. Boldly, they defied the State Government even as it few in plane-loads of paramilitary forces-taking their strength up to 85 companies and called out the army repeatedly. For a whole fortnight, the valley was totally paralysed, either by militant sponsored hartals or by curfew. Police firings claimed at least 20 lives even as Government buildings burnt or were rocked by blasts. In yet another twist that added a new dimension to the strife, militants killed seven police officials in the same period, three of them intelligence operative. They were not killed in mob violence. Each was picked out either by snipers from the streets of congested downtown Srinagar or shot by an assassin in pursuit.

J. N. Saxena, the newly-appointed director-general of the J & K Poilce, who was till recently the head of the Intelligence Bureau, [IB] in the State, describes this as one of the most serious crisis in Kashmir's history. For the first time since the 1965 crisis created by Pakistan. The Government is on the defensive. "50 per cent of the State authority is already in our hands," boasted 'Air Marshal' Noor

Khan, the head of the militant group "Allah Tigers" proclaiming allegiance to the [Engineer] Gulbadin Hekmatyar group of Afghan Mujahideen. "You Indians had better roll up your holdalls and leave with grace," he said in the course of an interview conducted in the heart of Srinagar.

An exaggerated claim no doubt, but not totally without foundation. A fortnight ago, the self-styled Air Marshal walked into the bars of Centur and Broadway, the two most important hotels in Srinagar, and ransacked the furniture and liquor stocks, while guards stood by. From that moment, all hotels stopped serving liquor. As word spread, other bars and liquor shops pulled down shutters. Across the Valley, liquor shops have put up banners announcing, that they are to soon reopen-as electronics or textile shops. The militants next targets-cinema halls, video shops and beauty parlours-too got the message quickly. Each of the valley's cinema halls is now closed. It is impossible to get a film on video cassette. Shopkeepers have dumped loads of playing cards, also proclaimed un-Islamic, in garbage-heaps next to their shops for the militants to see. In the heart of north Kashmir, on the outskirts of the town of Handwara near Baramula, Heemal, a swanky new cinema hall, is being converted into a cold-storage. The other cinema-owners, their efforts with the militants to buy their way out of trouble having failed, have another problem. They have to scrounge enough money to either absorb the cinema staff in other businesses or give them an immediate compensation of Rs. 20,000 each. Even the hotels are much too petrified to show any thing besides Pakistan Television plays on in-house videos.

Each morning the evidence of the militants power stares out from the pages of the major Urdu dailies. There are scores of advertisements from scared Kashmiris disclaiming links with the liquor trade or the ruling National Conference party. Others apologise for having had links with intelligence agencies and communists or for the "capital crime" of having voted in the last Lok Sabha elections, defying the militants boycott call.

Sitting in Srinagar's police control room, the nervecentre of the State's besieged law-and-order machinery, a senior officer wonders whose Government it is any-way. When the state imposes curfew, there is widespread defiance. When the militants call for *hartal*, no one stirs out. The militants groups latest target has been

"Indian" banks. Following their call, thousands have already closed their accounts in banks other than the J&K State Bank. Only one factor holds up a devastating run on the nationalised banks: they have all been closed because of strikes or curfew.

December 15 was the last date for companies to file advance tax. This year not even a fraction of dues has been paid. "The way things are, income tax collections from the valley this year won't even be half of "the annual average of Rs. 30 crore," says a senior Finance Ministry official.

"I have never seen such a mood in my career," says a J&K police officer as he tiptoes from one alley to the other in the city's trouble-prone Batmalloo area, clutching his .45 revolver. In his 24 years as a policeman in the State, he never carried a weapon and took pride in the fact that all he needed with the gentle people of Kashmir was a lot of tact and his swagger stick. Today, it's a different story. The gun is loaded, the safety-catch off and his finger ever on the trigger.

Even that is not of much avail. Time and again, mobs challenged the gun, defying policemen to fire at them. In scenes that were chillingly reminiscent of the video clips of Palestinian demonstrators teasing Israeli troopers on the West Bank, angry mobs led by women and children spilled into streets beckoning policemen to fire. Policemen with drew a little, fired in the air and yet the mob kept coming, chanting "Indian dogs go back" and *Azadi ka Matlab kya, La Ilahilallah*. [What is the meaning of freedom-there is no god but Allah].

Whether in Srinagar's Rambagh, Batmalloo, Zainakadal, Habakadal and Safakadal or in Anantnag, Baramulla or Sopore, the pattern was the same. "What the hell do we do with this situation," said an exasperated CRPF havildar Ram Ashrey Singh, "If we shoot effectively, there will be Jallianwala Bagh [Amritsar] each time. If we don't, they say the police are scared of them."

As the side continued, the police did, in fact have something to be scared about. Often, the women and children only provided a human shield for armed militants, as Havildar Kamashwar Chudhri of the CRPF's 24th battalion discovered too late. Leading a posse of troopers persuading a mob formed predominantly of women to return to their homes, he was suddenly hit in the neck by a single

shot from a pistol. No one heard the sound presumably, because the gun has a silencer on it. The other soliders only relised what was happening, when they saw a stream of blood flowing down the back of Chudhri's head as he crumpled. In retaliatory firing a demonstrator was killed but the sniper had achieved his purpose. As news of the killing spread, the Jwans grew more tense. Trigger-happy troops means more deaths which is exactly what the militants want. Every new "martyr" means a namaz-e-janaza (funeral prayer) from the mohalla's mosque, which inevitably results in an angry mob resulting in more firings, more martyrs and more mobs. As a build-up to urban insurgency, there couldn't be a more vicious cycle.

It is in this hopeless scenario: that thousands of men of the police and paramilitary forces struggle against what is blowing up into a mass upsurge backed by militancy. The newly-appointed lacking leadership and direction either at the tactical or political level, the policemen often look like stragglers or at best like hopless firemen scurrying from bushfire to bushfire, while the whole mountain is ablaze. There is no concerted, coordinated gameplan to take up the challenge and with each passing day, the militants are upping the ante.

With the situation sinking to new depths last week, the Centre was finally showing some sense of urgency. Director of Intelligence Bureau R. P. Joshi was sent on a fact finding mission which was also aimed at shoring up the flagging confidence of his own men after militant attacke on them.

In today's Kashmir, that approach is hopelessly myopic. Separatism has always been a popular concept in Kashmir. But the curx of the current problem is the total annihilation of the old-fashioned, ballot-oriented political leadership. Noteven the supposed extremists of 1987 like Qazi Nisar and Abdul Ghani Lone seem to matter any longer in the Valley. "We are not relevant at all. No one talks to us. No one listents to us. You all are up against an idea which is supported by the gun and believed by the people," says former Chief Minister Ghulam Mohammad Shah.

There could be some merit in saying that the Centre must back Farooq, because he is the only Kashmiri leader who stands openly by the State's accession to India. The tragedy is, he is not a leader any more.

The disenchantment reflects in the statement of taxidriver Mohammad Shafi: "G. M. Shah was a CCM (Curfew Chief Minister). [Dr.] Farooq a DCM (Disco Chief Minister). Next will be an ECM (Emergency Chief Minister). And, finally, there will be an ICM (Independent Chief Minister). It is the hatred for the Sheikh Abdullah family that best symbolises the mood. "More than 1,500 people died the day Sheikh Sahib was arrested in 1953," says G. M. Shah, who is Sheikh Abdullah's son-in-law." Today, soldiers have to guard his mausoleum so that people won't dig out his body and throw it into the Jehlum.

"In the backward district town of Kupwara, a string of curses erupts from the mob at the bus stand the moment the Sheikh's name is mentioned. "He sold us Kashmiris for money and to make his son the crown prince," says Mohammad Maqbool Mir 46, a lawyer, and the crowd intones: Laanat, laanat (shame, shame).

Nearly all the young men on the wanted list today were guarding ballot-boxes for the Muslim United Front (MUF) candidates in the last election. "For once people thought of integrating with the Indian mainstream through elections. But they were robbed. You can't steal our votes, thrash us with lathis and say 'come' join up with me," says Abdul Majid Banday, 37, Editor of Handwara weekly Tameel-i-Irshad. Echoes lawyer Abdul Hamid Lone, 36: "Indian democracy was stripped naked in the polling booths of KASHMIR. There is no democracy this side of Banihal."

Even in Trehgam, the teeming village in northern Kashmir, where the Kashmir Liberation Front first took roots in the oversized log-hut of Maqbool Butt, hanged for the murder of a policeman, the same sentiment is echoed. One of Butt's younger brothers is currently in jail and the youngest Zahoor Butt says he is ready to die as "one has to die some day anyway". "What happened to those who trusted Indian promises and voted the last time?" He asks. Adds his cousin Shoaib Mohammad Shah: "Indians cannot even call us anti-national. We have no nationality as yet, how can we be anti-national?".

Police Chief, Mr. Saxena, says, "Our greatest challenge is to restore the morale of the police and the people. We have to change both our tactics and strategy". But the ultimate official defence, as put forward by Farooq in his many utterances, is that the problem is

basically a creation of Pakistan and should also be tackled at the political level between New Delhi and Islamabad.

There is no wishing away the reality-the roots of this motivation lie in the sequence of events in 1974 which led to the accession of the state to India-and the new Government at the Centre has to quickly learn to live with the situation. There is not much by way of concessions the Government can make to the militants when there is already widespread questioning by the BJP of the special status accorded to the state under Article 370 of the Constitution.

India Today, January 15, 1990.

Kashmir : A Moral Issue

Ashok Mitra

....Do we see the end of the tunnel in Kashmir...? We may win all the narrow technical and legal arguments on Kashmir. We may prove to our hearts' content that the Pakistani authorities have been upto all kinds of mischief along the border. Besides, as development elsewhere in the world also indicate, a hundred complications can cloud the right to break away on the part of another political entity. Each of these points may be well taken. That does not still obliterate the outstanding other reality.

Jagmohan and round-the-clock curfews and the most intensive combing operations by the Army accompanied by shootings and killings and detentions without trial can at most enable us to hold on to Kashmir in the physical sense. But these modalities, which yield results for today, could also provide the ground for fear that we might run the risk of losing irretrievable the battle for the Kashmiri mind. Whether we like to admit the fact or not, the conditions are one of insurgency in Kashmir; not even a minuscule faction of the population in the Valley is currently in a mood to continue the political connection with the Indian Union. Because of the operations undertaken over the past four months, the situation has actually worsened. As the rigours of the curfew have mounted, more young people have either been shot or picked up for

interrogation by the Army, and stories of official excesses have spread like wild fire, revulsion toward the Indian Union has grown even more intense.

The Jajmohans serve a limited purpose, they are no answer to ethnic nationalism. An army of occupation is just that; it does not even succeed in pacification, it merely puts the lid on a boiling cauldron. Pakistan's endeavours notwithstanding, since most other nations have skeletons in their own cupboard, the rest of the world may let us keep Kashmir. That would not however signal the end of the affair. Unassuaged national sentiments will seek a way out. However, punctilious the surveillance, these days no border is beyond penetration. With AK-27s and AK-47s available in the bazaars at reportedly less than two thousand rupees apiece... the Valley promises to reverberate with gunfire for months on end and years on end. We may still manage to keep Kashmir in shackles. How do we escape from the moral problem though? There is one pseudo-secular argument aired with some vigour in defence of our official stand over Kashmir which richly deserves to be instantly demolished. We must, it is said, hold on to Kashmir by hook or by crook, for, should the Valley be lost, Hindu fundamentalism in the country will raise its head, it will begin to spit fire, and, seething with dark anger at the dispossession of Kashmir, it will make a target of the life and property of our one hundred million and odd Muslim compatriots: this is a frightening argument, for it wants to give formal recognition to the doctrine 'of the hostage'. Short of verbiage, it really amounts to the following: in case Kashmir leaves India, the Hindu fanatics will in retribution try to liquidate the nations' Muslim minorities; we cannot allow that to happen, so Kashmir has to be retained by us, if necessary by force. The argument is false on at least two counts. First, the issue in Kashmir is neither communal nor religious, it is one of nationalism seeking to assert its dignity. Second, secularism cannot be a conditional attitude. Whether Kashmir stays or goes is an issue which, in the final analysis, concerns the fundamentalist who want to drag our countryback into the dark morass of medievalism is a separate clear-cut-issue of principle; that fight has to be without compromise, and it must not be made into an alibi for abdicating from our moral commitments elsewhere.

The Telegraph, Calcutta, May 16, 1990

Brute Force

Shiraz Sidhva

It is weird game that is being played out in Kashmir. At the end of each violent day, the administration gathers at Jaggmohan's well-fortified Governor's House in Srinagar and, over cups of steaming Qahwa discuss how well the security forces have succeeded in countering terrorism. A head count is even taken of the "militants" eliminated. Everyone present agrees with Governor Jaggmohan that the administration certainly has the "upper hand" in the battle for Kashmir.

But no one gets to the crux of the problem: the gradual alienation of the people from the Indian government. And if anything is responsible for this, it is security forces' high-handedness and brutality. Take for instance, the events following the murder of the vice-chancellor of the Kashmir University and the general manager of the HMT by militants on the morning of April, 10.

By noon on 11 April, the search operations in the valley had intensified. From six that morning to well past midnight, the residents of downtown Batmaloo paid the price for the action of the "freedom fighters" (terrorists, to the rest of the world). Sixteen days of curfew followed. And in New Delhi the power-wielders raved about the phenomenal success their crackdowns were yielding. The Indian press too hailed the state administration.

Whatever press reports might suggest, normalcy is a far cry. The valley is ominously calm during curfew and combing operations. But the residents of downtown Srinagar have a sad story to relate. Everyone, they say, who has chosen to stay on in Kashmir is branded a subversive, a terrorist or an anti-Indian; the "innocents" have all fled the state. And they are not very wrong. "You say innocents are being killed?" exclaims member of the Kashmiri Hindu Migrants Forum in New Delhi angrily. "There is not one single innocent there-they are all anti-Indians." For the average Indian today, the Kashmiri is an enemy.

"I have always loved India, swears Nuzhat, a university lecturer in her thirties who has resisted repeated warnings from her

relatives in Delhi to leave the valley, "But last week, I wondered what this India really meant. They have forsaken us, written us off." With deep anguish she remembers the day the army burst into her garden, lined up the menfolk of the house outside and frisked the women. Her husband, who is a loyal Indian, cannot forgive himself for having been so helpless when it all happened. "They were shocked to see a biography of Nehru in the study. I told them they would find thousands of them in the valley. If this is my plight today, what about the poor people who have nobody to phone up and nobody to turn to for help?"

"No, there is nobody to turn to for help, we are all damned, we are all called pro-Pakistanis," says a head constable in the JK Armed Police wondering why he has spent so much of his life in service. "They had no respect for this uniform when they burst into my house and grabbed my only son at midnight. The jawan pushed me aside, spitting '*saala Pakistani*', and shoved me to the wall with the butt of his gun. India has given up the people of Kashmir to ensure that they keep the territory?"

The Home Minister, Mufti Saeed, had confidently proclaimed that Eid celebrations in Kashmir would be "normal". "There is no Eid here," wails the mother of 19-year old Shakeel in Chhanpora.

"They dragged my son out of his room, and the fact that my husband was a government employee for decades didn't help to get us any mercy. We don't know where he is now, or if he is alive. All I know is that if they do any thing to him I will never forgive India."

As little children play hopscotch and queue up to buy orange-sticks in the drizzle, the resilience of a better community is very much in evidence. "We have nothing against the Indian people, it is the repression that we cannot bear," says Amina Begum while trying hard to retain her composure. Five days before Eid, her husband went out during curfew hours to buy vegetables. The jawan shot him in the shoulder. "He lay there in the dirt, clutching at two small brinjals," she sobs.

The Hassan family in Chota Bazar were luckier. Their son, though beaten badly by the cops, survived. It all happened when the women of the house were washing the drawing room carpet during curfew. The jawans who were on duty in the locality mistook the red

water that flowed out into the drain for blood. They broke into the house and insisted that both Mushir-ul-Haq and Abdul Ghani whose bodies were found that morning, were murdered in their houses. The CRPF officer on duty in the area admits that it was a mistake, but hastily adds: "You never know these people. They all have links with militants."

"In a people's movement everybody is bound to know the militants," explains a senior journalist. "After all, if approximately 5,000 boys from the valley have turned militants how is it possible that nobody knows them?" he asks indignantly. Zubeda Begum of Nowpora insists that her family has no connections with the boys who are fighting for our freedom. On the afternoon of April 19, her 65-year old husband Mohammed Ibrahim Magloo, owner of the Mughal Darbar restaurant, and his five sons were taken away by the cops. The old man and two sons including the youngest Javed, who is 16 and mentally retarded, were released after a week. It was only the neighbour who helped the family during the seven agonising days. But the trauma will continue until the other sons return home.

"The limits of harassment have been crossed," declares a government official in Anantnag. "They make people pick up the dirt from the drains and rub it over the Liberation Front sings and then they say that things are improving. Our little children are made to do murgha". It takes a while to discover what they are talking about. Explains a local journalist: "A heavy stone is placed on their backs and they are made to do sit-ups while the forces stand by and use the worst abuses possible."

The atmosphere outside the Jamia Masjid on the morning of Eid is tense. It is not the right time to talk police atrocities. But the mood is more defiant than festive. Within the ancient mosque, Maulvi Farooq makes an impassioned and inflammatory speech; the thousands who have gathered here to offer 'namaz' hang their heads in mourning as the head priest announces the names of the "martyrs" of the valley.

"Whom do we turn to for help?" shouts a young man in the crowd. His brother, Parvez Ahmed Khan lost his life fighting the security forces." They chased him into a stream and pushed him in the water with their rifle-butts screaming, *Azadi, chahiye, Wahi milegi* (you want freedom? You'll get it in there)," We recovered his body

hours later," recalls Ghulam Ahmed sadly, his close friend. "There was nothing we could do to save him".

In Anantnag, the family members of Ghulam Mohammad Khanday are too shocked to speak. The small-time shopkeeper, in his mid-30s, had nothing to do with the militants yet he was picked up by the forces for interrogation. Khanday died in custody after 11 days. A CRPF official admits that Khanday had nothing to reveal.

The paramilitary forces and the army, however, cannot be blamed for the excesses. After all they are trained to fight wars not subversive. The Jammu and Kashmir Police, which could have been effectively used to weed out the guerrillas, has been sidelined and some of its personnel are actually helping out the militants in frustration. The state's intelligence network, whatever the Governor might claim, is no match for the militants' information-gathering system.

A month after the forces launched an all-out offensive, the militants are, for the first time this year, on the defensive. There is no doubt that at the moment the government does have the "upper hand". However, compared to the scale of the operation, the results are not as "encouraging" as is being made out to be by the Home Ministry and Governor.

Sunday, Calcutta May 13, 1990.

Kashmir Problem

Jaya Jaitley

Even today any Kashmiri will admit that 1977 and 1983 were the only free and fair elections held in the state in the long years that India has said that there was no Kashmir problem.

Did anyone ever give a thought to the fact that while we happily allow violence and rigging and oppression of voters in a state like Bihar, that a murder of democracy in the crucial and sensitive Muslim majority border state of Kashmir was like administering oneself slow poison?

In 1983, with the dynastic principle again at work, a fair election, saw Farooq Abdullah cocking a snook at the 'great lady' at the centre. The joy all over the valley knew no bounds, and yet there was a sense of suspicion shown by her during the campaign when she pointed in the direction of Pakistan and predicted danger in order to gather the Hindu vote in Jammu.

When Jagmohan was so obviously sent and so efficiently diabolical in arranging Farooq's topple in 1984, Farooq began the first of his downside actions. No one ever thought for a moment that may be the Kashmiris would like a ruler of their own whom they could elect or throw out as they wished. Is not that what democracy is all about? We forgot, it seems.

When Farooq and Rajiv Gandhi aligned, it was as awkward as if every Kashmiri was tied up in a three-legged race not of their choice. Everyone eventually fell over. The balance of Farooq and the Centre as ruler and opposition was at least Indian, moderate and secular but with both on one side the vacuum in the opposition was quickly filled by the militant, more fundamentalist MUF Politics abhors a vacuum everyone forgot....

The 1987 election was a major turning point as it marked a return to totally unprincipled rigging "for the sake of the nation" denying the MUF a chance to be part of the assembly and at least participate in a mainstream forum. The three-legged runners could not cope with the anger thus generated and terrorism saw its genesis.

Now, if we still continue to blame Pakistan and do not remember that we have done our Kashmiri Muslim brothers and sisters many wrongs and that Jagmohan can never....bludgeon them to love us we will not only lose our most important limb but something much more important, our secular spirit.

the Times of India, New Delhi, March 13, 1990.

Kashmir : A Deep-rooted Alienation

Dr N.Y. Dole

A DIALOGUE team on behalf of Rashtra Seva Dal (RSD) was sent to Jammu and Kashmir during the first half of April 1990.

RSD is an informal educational organisation believing in democratic socialism, secular nationalism and scientific temper not affiliated to any political party but which is not a political. It does not receive any assistance from the state or central government.

The objective of the visit to Jammu and Kashmir was to establish contact and have a dialogue with the Kashmiri people. When we reached Srinagar the town was completely under the control of para-military forces. Our vehicle was stopped and checked several times at gun point. We had the bitter taste of 'Police Raj' even before entering the town. Curfew continued for 11 days without any relaxation.

Local women met women colleagues of the team to express their suppressed anger and frustration. In all we met about one thousand persons including officers of Jammu and Kashmir police force and jawans of the para-military forces.

On the basis of the visit and talks we have the following observations to make:

There is no civil government or rule of law at present in Kashmir and the collapse of administration is total. The whole valley has been handed over to the para-military forces. Jammu and Kashmir police are looked upon with mistrust. In fact every Kashmiri Muslim is *prima facie* considered a pro-Pakistani traitor. The alienation of the people is total and the masses have lost all faith in political leaders. Both the major political parties, the National Conference and the Congress, have become irrelevant in the valley. The state government, i.e. the governor and the central government, it seems are working at cross purposes. The central government is either not giving clear cut guidelines to the governor or the governor is ignoring the directives of the central government. The central government's public declarations are also confusing. The roles of the Home Minister and the minister for Kashmir Affairs seem to be overlapping if not contradictory. The BJP is adding to the confusion in the state. The governor and the senior officers are naturally taking full advantage of this situation. No government department functions properly. Banks are closed, telephones do not work and power supply is erratic. Strict curfew has added to the non-functioning of essential services.

The present situation is the cumulative effect of the injustices perpetrated on Kashmir during the last 40 years. Things could not have reached such a stage in merely three months of Janta Dal rule at the centre.

Increase in educational facilities and expansion of vision created an explosion of expectations among the youth. Ever rising unemployment created frustration adding fuel to the feeling of neglect by the central government. No worthwhile development took place in Kashmir. For reasons best known to them, the central and state governments always appointed outsiders to higher posts in state administration. In other jobs the local pandits have a monopoly. This created bitterness among the Muslim youth. Article 370 in the Indian Constitution gave special status to Jammu and Kashmir. Gradually there was an erosion in this article and even its diluted form is not tolerated by the BJP. There is widespread propaganda to abolish the special status of Jammu and Kashmir. This has created apprehensions in the minds of well intentioned people. Even though the prime minister has publicly assured that the article will continue, Kashmiri people fear that the Janta Dal may succumb to pressure from the BJP.

Governor Jagmohan has toady become a symbol of ruthless suppression of legitimate aspirations of the people in the valley. His continuation in the office is responsible for the discord between Hindus and Muslims. The Hindu population by and large respect Jagmohan but Muslims throughout the state dislike him. The image of the governor is that of the suppressor. Either he should try to change his image or the government of India should transfer him. As his own life is in danger he cannot move about as freely in the valley as he could during his first tenure.

When para-military forces are given full freedom there are bound to be excesses and atrocities. During encounters, arrests, checks and searches innocent men and women suffer. Those who suffer injustice at the hands of para-military forces have no means of obtaining justice. This creates bitterness, frustration and anti-India feelings.

The need of the hour is restraint and caution on the part of all those who are concerned with the problem. Communal feelings should not be whipped up in India especially in Jammu and Ladakh.

Unfortunately, communal parties and organisations are exploiting the present problem to generate an anti-Muslim atmosphere in whole of India, thus creating additional insecurity in the minds of Kashmiris, thereby giving secessionist forces an instrument of propaganda. The BJP supporters are creating an atmosphere which is not favourable to the government. Officially BJP states that it will not insist on abrogation of Article 370. Perhaps they have not read the Article 371 otherwise they will demand abrogation of that article also.

The centre has to face the problem created by previous Congress governments and tackle it with compassion and sympathy for human life.

[The RSD team was led by Bhai Vaidya. Other members of the team were NY Dole, Mrs. Veena Surana, Jagan Phadnis, Nura Shaikh and Mrs. Aruna Tiwari.]

Economic and Political Weekly Bombay, May 5, 1990.

A Cry From Kashmir

"The situation in the Kashmir Valley is fast approaching a point of no return. If the National Front government is really serious about solving the Kashmir question, it must immediately abandon the totally counterproductive strategy of state terrorism and initiate a dialogue with the militants who have emerged as the real representatives of the popular Kashmir sentiment today. Contrarily, if the Centre sticks to the old line of repression, invokes Disturbed Areas Act in the valley and indulges in meaningless political exercises by propping up a thoroughly discredited Farooq Abdullah or similar relics of different vintages, only precious time will be lost and alongside the Congress and the National Conference, the Janta Dal and VP Sing will also go down in history as prime accuseds of the Kashmir tragedy."

The statement was made by Indian Peoples Front President Com. Nagbhusan Patnaik at a press conference in Delhi on 25 June, Com. Patnaik was sharing with the press the experiences of the

IPF central team's visit to the valley from 17 to 22 June. The team was headed by Com. Patnaik himself and comprised Comrades Dipankar Bhattacharya, Akhilendra Pratap Singh and Ramji Ray (all General Secretaries), Com. Rameshwar Prasad, M.P., Com. Sankar Mitra (IPF Central working Committee member and central spokesperson of CPI-M) and Com. Taqi Rahim (Vice-President of IPF's Bihar Unit). Apart from Srinagar, the team also visited the neighbouring districts of Anantnag, Baramulla and Kupwara and talked to hundreds of people from different walks of life.

Repression and Terror

Life in Srinagar city, the otherwise beautiful and bustling capital of Kashmir, remains almost perpetually paralysed. Since January the city has been experiencing daily dusk-to-dawn curfew, and during Jagmohan's 127-day-long reign of terror there has even been ceaseless curfew for as long as three weeks. The ubiquitous patrol jeeps and sten-wielding security forces are often the only symbol of life in today's Srinagar. Tourism, the mainstay of Kashmiri economy, is in a shambles. Since ninety per cent of employees in government offices, banks and other public institutions in the valley come from the two per cent Hindu population, Kashmiri pandits in particular, with the mass migration of Hindus work in these crucial establishments has come to a complete standstill.

Scratch the surface of this graveyard peace and you can hear Kashmir crying. Every household has its share of agony --- the agony of harassment, humiliation, torture, rape and killing, all at the hands of our own security forces. During Jagmohan's reign there were three major state-gifted massacres-in each case scores of innocent, unarmed processionists were brutally gunned down by the CRPF and other paramilitary forces. In spite of repeated assurances that the innocent civilian population will not be harassed and victimised, the campaign of state repression continues unabated with all its arbitrariness in the regime of Governor Saxena as well.

Repression has left no room for open political activities. Politics has been driven underground and guns have emerged as the only viable political idiom. This is indeed an unprecedented, alien development in Kashmir politics. In fact, temperamentally, Kashmiris are still as soft and peace-loving as ever and almost all of

them view the present phase of armed militancy as a forced aberration. and unlike in Punjab, the militants of Kashmir are not resorting to mass killings of innocent people. Almost all of the two-hundred-odd people assassinated by the 'Mujahideen' in the last six months are reported to be informers and police agents. And more than sixty per cent of them are reportedly Kashmiri Muslims.

A Mass Upsurge

Also, unlike the fundamentalist-dominated Khalistani terrorism in Punjab, secessionism in Kashmir has emerged as a mass movement backed by tremendous popular support and participation. And fortunately, fundamentalists are still not the dominant force in Kashmir. It is the JKLF with its concept of a united, democratic, secular Kashmir which represents the leading spirit of the secessionist upsurge in Kashmir, though of late there has been a proliferation of militant fundamentalist outfits. Of these, the Hazb-ul-Mujahideen, the militant wing of Jammāt-e-Islami, has gained considerable ground in the countryside.

But in any case, the secessionist unrest in Kashmir cannot be dismissed as an anti-India conspiracy led by a handful of subversives aided and abetted by Pakistan. Pakistan is definitely involved and quite understandably so, but it will be a serious folly to overlook the primarily internal root of the unrest and the total sympathy and involvement of the Kashmiri people behind it.

The National Conference, the supposedly 'mainstream' representative of Kashmir politics, has virtually become irrelevant in today's Kashmir. The top leaders of the party are camping in London or Delhi while the support base in the valley has been swept away by the tide of the movement. Similar is the case with the Congress. Even the well-to-do Kashmiri merchants and other affluent sections of Kashmiri elite, who are tied with the rest of India through diverse business and social connections and arguably the prime beneficiaries of Kashmir's union with India, are in no position to campaign against secession. Not so much out of fear of isolation or from a bargaining point of view as out of sheer disgust with the endless harassment and humiliation, insult and torture, they are having to suffer at the hands of the Indian security forces. So completely have the entire people been alienated and antagonised that all internal differences and divisions of the Kashmiri society

have become absolutely secondary at the moment. The slogan of Azadi with its magic spell has become the singular rallying point for the entire six million people of Kashmir.

The yearning for independence is of course not a new thing in Kashmir. It reflects the Kashmiri's pride in his identity, his pentup anger against the 'Indian' betrayal and a natural reaction to the suspicion with which the government of India has always treated Kashmir and its people. Even neighbouring Himachal Pradesh, which attained statehood much later, has received much greater developmental attention and assistance from the centre. In terms of recruitment in government services, Kashmiri Muslims' presence is only inversely proportional to their proportion in the valley's population. And Article 370, which the BJP sees as the primary obstacle to an effective integration of Kashmir with the 'national mainstream' but which in reality is the crucial constitutional clause underlying and upholding Kashmiri's accession to India, has hardly been honoured in practice by the Centre during the four decades of its relations with Kashmir.

Indian Peoples Front, New Delhi, August, 1990.

Why Gag Media in Kashmir?

Nikhil Chakravarty

An aspect of the Kashmir crisis is the serious alienation of the people of the valley from the rest of India. This is perhaps the most crucial aspect of the present problem in Kashmir.

It is possible for the armed forces at the disposal of the Indian government to overpower more than 5,000. But how do we win over the 40 lakh Kashmiris who inhabit the picturesque valley? This battle for the mind and heart of the people can't be won by the might of the Indian armed forces and the paramilitary units now mobilized there on a massive scale. As the present phase of armed operation scores over the armed secessionists, the question of regaining the confidence and goodwill of the public in the valley has to claim top-priority consideration. One wonders how much preparation has been made in this direction by the government,

preoccupied as it has been so far with the immediate job of silencing the secessionist's gun.

Inevitably, there has to be confusion and even misunderstanding on the area of demarcation between police action and pacification programme. There is also the danger of taking a mechanical view of the two objectives, that the people should first finish the job of putting down the secessionists, and only after that, begin the task of pacification. Such an approach may turn out to be disastrous because the police action may itself destroy to a large extent, whatever attachment or goodwill the people in the valley may have towards India beyond the Banihal.

In this context, one has to understand the role of the human rights activists reporting on the situation in the valley. Well meaning critics have raised the argument that when there is a virtual war situation between the ruthless secessionist militants on the one hand and the police and the armed forces on the other, the question of defending the republic has to be the prime consideration. While this point can hardly be dismissed when the nation as a whole is concerned with the open challenge to its territorial integrity, one has to understand the other side of the case too. The very fact that these human rights activists are from our own country underlines the strength of our open democratic system. These human rights reports can have a very salutary impact on the Kashmir mind.

In the task of bringing back the Kashmiri people into the mainstream of Indian democracy, the media's role has so far hardly been recognised. The responsibility for this laps lies on both the media practitioners themselves and the authorities handling Kashmiri affairs. In the cross fire between the militant secessionists and the security forces, one of the first casualties has been the press. While the secessionist is keen on silencing his critics at gunpoint, the government has clamped down a virtual censorship by various means. Initial efforts at ensuring arrangements for the journalists to function was abandoned and there is no gainsaying that the authorities have severely assaulted the right of pressmen to function in the valley.

The government seems to be totally oblivious to the important role that the media can play in normalizing the situation in Kashmir. With its supreme obsession about the efficacy of the gun

in tackling the Kashmir crisis, the government has denied its own media the opportunity of helping in the process of normalization in the state. It is a matter of shame that the television station in Srinagar has virtually been closed down on the plea that it had been infiltrated by the secessionists. If the police agencies could be overhauled - as the authorities claim they have been - why not the Srinagar radio and television station?

In the situation prevailing in Kashmir today, any intelligent administration should have asked for more reinforcement not only for manning the radio and television stations but also for a massive programme of mass communication through these media.

One is appalled by the total neglect on the part of the government on this score. There are hundreds of distinguished people - writers, artists, dramatists, persons of distinction in different walks of life all over India - who have at some time or the other worked in Kashmir. How many of them, if any at all, have been approached by radio and TV to address our fellow countrymen in the valley?

With thousand of Kashmiri Pandit families having left the valley, a new arena of concern and tension has emerged. The media can very effectively counter such a danger. A peculiar future of these refugees is that they have not come away with all their belonging. Most of them have left the keys to their homes with their Muslim Kashmiri neighbours to look after their property in their absence. Couldn't this be highlighted in the media?

The journalists of the print media have also not risen to the occasion. While one can understand the difficulties of the local press in Srinagar to run their papers in the cross-fire of the secessionists and the security forces - both sides pressuring them recklessly - the bigger Indian newspapers outside Kashmir have also avoided taking up the challenge. Their correspondents stationed in Srinagar have come away. Normally in winter months they move down to Jammu alongwith the state secretariat (the so-called Durbar), but these are abnormal times and one would have expected them to stay in the valley because that is where the news has been.

Alternatively, the big Indian newspapers have to send correspondents regularly to the valley to present before the Indian public their perceptions of the crisis there. Such a step is bound to

fetch excellent results as could be seen in the remarkable can did portrait of the anguish in the valley in Aysha Kagal's recent report in the newspaper The Times of India. Surely, such despatches can help considerably towards not only a better understanding of the magnitude of the crisis but also finding a way out of it. The job of upholding the integrity of the nation is not that of the security forces alone. It is multi-dimensional, in which the media in all their branches can play a very significant role.

The Times of India, New Delhi, May 13, 1990.

Kashmir's Misfortune

Bharat Karnad

The misfortune of Kashmir is that Delhi has treated the so-called Kashmiri leaders with kid gloves, afraid that to hold them accountable for sins of omission and commission would be to court the danger of turning them into pro-Pakistan activists and sympathisers. In the event, such experience as the Kashmiris have had of elections (like those held in 1956, 1972, 1977 and 1987) and of elected leaders have been wholly unedifying. Democracy to the average Kashmiri is only another name for a notoriously flagrant system of election-rigging and enjoyment of spoils by the "victorious" politician and party with virtually no benefits accruing to the people.

To add insult to injury, chief ministers were installed and just as abruptly removed by Delhi because political considerations and not because they provided awful government. Even Sheikh Abdullah, the giant figure in contemporary Kashmir politics, was not spared this ignominy and neither were his successors.

President's Rule in the state has robbed the Kashmiris of even the deficient democracy they have got used to over the years. This is a disaster. What's worse from the point of winning the heart and the mind of the people is the police raj and the state of siege instead. As numerous human rights organisations have discovered and as our own investigations show, the police and the paramilitary forces and the jawans from the army, aiming to hand down the extremist and the secessionists, routinely end up preying on and victimising ordinary citizens, dishonouring women-folk, and

otherwise carrying on as if Kashmir was an enemy zone captured in a war rather than a troubled province of the country that needs careful handling. The shame of it!

But a low intensity conflict is unlikely to prise Kashmiri away from India's grip. The grip is tight and a people can be held against their will. India's military muscle, ruthless police methods, and a cowed population can insure that in perpetuity. The question to ask is whether the Kashmiri people should not be given the choice to if not opt out the Indian Union, then at least to enjoy genuine democracy.

What will it cost? The jettisoning of the usual gang of discredited politicians and of the system of rigging elections? Encouragement to a new corps of leaders, grassroot level up, in the first free and fair elections to convince the Kashmiris to give the Indian Union another chance?

These political measures will have to be augmented with employment generating private and public sector ventures and schemes and the revival on a war-footing of the tourism industry - the lifeblood of the state, and policies more fully to mesh Kashmir with the rest of the country.

A hard, unremitting struggle against the terrorists is unavoidable, but the government should take care to see this fight does not degenerate into a helter-skelter targeting and mistreatment of civilians. (One sure way to reign in soldiers and policemen is to met-out exemplary punishment to those in uniform found responsible for egregious misbehaviour, especially against women, children and old people), The situation in Kashmir can still be salvaged but not if Delhi persists in its pigheaded belief of the *danda* along fetching results that sensible, quiet, political and economic policies piggybacking on sustained but humanely-executed anti-terrorist operation can't.

India Week, Delhi, August 24, 1990.

"Mar Loge, Ya Pyar Doge?"

N.V. Subramanian & Brij Raj Singh

A Friday, August 10, a motor and a foot column of the 6 Rajputana Rifles was ambushed two-and-a-half kilometers from Paazipora village in the Kupwara district of Kashmir. Allegedly in retaliation, some 80 army jawans set upon the Pazipora villagers—men, women and children—leaving behind a trail of death, rape and destruction of property. A report:

In Paazipora itself, reportedly justful *jawans*, not finding the militants, set out to ravage the women. Nearly 12 of the them, intuiting such intention, attempted swiftly to make a gateway—reached another village, Balipora, but were soon spotted by the *jawans* at the house of Saja, 60.

Saja, stringy and dispirited, now has clots under her eyes and on the right forearm to show for the spirited, but apparently vain, fight she put up against the *jawans* to thwart their bid to gang-rape (it now turns out to be) six Kashmiri girls in their early 20s.

Three of them, Atiqa, Jana and Taja, separately and after much prodding, spoke to India Week in a cloistered room of a double-storey house way from the prying eyes of the villagers, most of whom know of the outrage but not of the identity of the victims.

Atiqa, 20, unmarried and illiterate, is unsure as she begins her narrative: "I ran away from home to Balipora, half a kilometre away, when I first heard the army came in. I was sitting in the verandah of Saja's house with the other escaped girls. Then the *jawans* came.

"I was taken to the cowshed with two other girls (Taja and Jana). My clothes were forcibly taken off. Then I was raped by three men. There were 20 to 30 soldiers standing outside, guarding the cowshed. More of them wanted to come in. But, suddenly, a whistle blew and they stopped."

Atiqa, who says she can recognise her rapists, is engaged to be married. What happened to it? "It is upto to God," says a police officer, uncomfortably and helplessly. "Her father has been

hospitalised for over a month and her mother has no knowledge of Atiqa's tragedy."

Jana, 25, married but childless, in turn, faces possible rejection by her husband, a labourer who left for Srinagar eight days before the crime. She hasn't slept after it, gets recurrent nightmares, and says "I do not want to face this brutality any more, I do not want to see the face of my rapists."

Jana says: "Hearing the sound of the firing, I fled, not knowing if the militray or the miliants were responsible, I took shelter in Balipora alongwith my mother, my brother's wife and eight other girls," "Ten persons were present in the cowshed. We were all sitting in the courtyard when three girls were taken to the cowshed-the pretty ones were chosen, one of the being me. I cannot recognise the rapists, neither do I want to see them again." Says a villager, "If her husband is broadminded, he will keep her, otherwise...."

Taja, 22, the third of the girls to be raped, is assured of security to the extent that her husband, Bashir Ahmed Bhatt, has not turned her away. But the couple's plight, as indeed of Paazipora and perhaps countless other villages, is tellingly expressed in Bhatt's reply to Taja's admission on rape.

Taja recounted the conversation with her husband: "He said, I am helpless and this is no fault of yours. If you had given consent to what they did, I would have divorced you. But tell this to no one."

Taja says, after the firing began and she started off, like the others, in the direction of Balipora, the army jawans began chasing her. "I somehow eluded them and reached Saja's house where other army jawans forced me into the cowshed. I resisted but they pushed me in."

Taja continues: "They tried to take off my trousers and when I resisted. they tore it into shreds. Then the *jawans* asked me, *Mar loge ya pyar doge?* I said, *Maar do par pyar nahin denge*'. Then I was repeatedly raped. The clothes I wore were burnt in heap.

"What can I say now?" asks Taja, resignedly, withdrawing into herself in the unlighted room. "The biggest thing for me, my honour, has been taken away from me. I can recognise my rapists

but I do not know who they are. When I was being raped, the sky and earth were also weeping."

Such assault on (Kashmiri) honours is compounded by Srinagar officialdom's widespread disbelief of the rape incidents, indeed of the whole carnage. On the day after local press publicity to it, the state's director-general of police, Saksena, fully absolved the army of blame and claimed 12 militants had been killed in an encounter in Kupwara.

While the outrage is medically unproven, there appears no substantive reason to doubt the girls version. Their charge has, additionally, been bolstered by a first information report (FIR) registered by SHO Shah on approval from the superintendent of police, Kupwara, S.K. Mishra.

"My SP has done a good job," says Shah. "He allowed me to register a case against the army. Without that, I wouldn't have been able to do so."

Such self-congratulation is, of course, lost on Ali Mohammed Sheikh, the nursing orderly and middle farmer. "*Admi teen cheeze ke liye jeeta hai: izzat, jaan aur maal. Megar idhar, na hamari izzat mehfooz, na jaan mehfooz, na maal mehfooz. Hum jayen to jayen kahan? Kya hum us jagah jayen jahan khuda bhi na jata.*" (A man lives for three things: honour; life and property. But here none of these three is safe. Where do we go? To where even God does not enter).

Sheikh's seething anger against the army has another face, "*Humne fauj ki kya madad nahin ki? 1947 se lakar ab tak, hum ne unke saath picket banaye, kandha diya., yeh kaunsa haq rakhte hein jo aise dahshat phailate hain.*" (What help haven't we rendered to the army? From 1947 till now we have helped build their pickets, personally shouldered officers across rivers. What right do they have to spread such terror)?

"*Jab assi saal ka aadmi militant ban sakta hai, to mera kya hai main to 48 saal ka hoon.*" (When an 80 of age can become a militant, why not me? I am only 48 years old)." says Sheikh. "*Fauj lare jo unse larta hai. Agar hum militant hain to hamaara laash kutton ko dalo. Jab ham militant nahin hain to hame kyun sataya jata hai?*" (The army should fight with those who fight against it. If

we were militants they could have fed out bodies to the dogs. throw them among the refuse. But we are not militants. Why are they troubling us)?

Similarly is questioning Ghulam Ahmed Bhatt, a trade union leader of government employees, with great bluered scabs and clotted blood on his back to show for army brutality. Bhatt's 15-years old son was shot through the head in the fields, and his house was burnt.

"*Main India par khoob bharosa rakhat hoon,*" (I trust India), says Bhatt, "I have attended trade union meetings in Bombay and Bangalor. I told the jawans, see, this is my identity card, this is my curfew pass. But they retorted: *Bhund perakh apna identity card our curfew pass. humme sab kuch maloom hai. Tum sab Pakistani ho* (Shove your identity card and curfew pass up your a... We know everything. You are all Pakistanis)."

Such sweeping assertion took in its net apparently nearly everyone: from a Paazi villager who has no use for his legs, yet has deep wounds on his back caused by rifle butts, to a 70-year old retiree, who has self-advertising gashes on his forehead, reminder of an armed force gone berserk. "They kill us in our homes, they kill us when we leave it," says Bhatt. "What shall we do?"

The answer comes, as if with the winds. "*Jobhi zulm karte hain, jobhi militant bante hain,*" (When atrocities are committed, militants are made)," reckons a young villager in there swelling crowds at Paazipora principal *punchayat* clearing. The acquiescence is restrained but resonant.

India Week, Delhi August 24, 1990.

"Tabahi Macha Di Hai"

N.V. Subramaniam

Charges of Excesses

Rape of women in search-and-combing operation usually in outlying, border district, physical violence against non-militants; willful destruction of property, principally torching homes with the

use of an unidentified "white powder" and kerosene; and the forced "rounding-up of youth, numbering roughly 100 a day, valley-wide.

In a resolution of these possibly lies a solution, a respected Kashmir civil administrator ventures, yet unconvincingly. "We have to draw a line between the militants and civilians. Every Kashmiri is not a militant, most of them are neither violent nor pro-Pakistani" .

"Give the Kashmiri an occasion," he says, "to give vent to his feelings. But that, the government and the ruling elite will not allow. Gen Zaki rushes to the spot when his boys are injured but keeps aloof when they go berserk." Lt. Gen. M.A.Zaki commands the XV Corps in the Srinagar sector.

Gen Zaki could not be reached for his reaction to such a damaging assessment, the Centre has made series of enquiries with regard to the Kupwara carnage and the amry's role.

Jameel Qureshi, security adviser to the state governor, however comes strenuously to its defence.

Kashmiris are loathe to accept such a view, so are certain senior officials seconded to the paramilitary forces. A top BSF official was particularly self-critical: "The allegations of rape are 100 per cent correct."

There are numerous incidents in Srinagar and in the other five valley districts of ambushed security forces retaliating as far as three-four kms away from the site the original shootout.

In Kupwara, the distance between the site of action and of retaliation was two-and-a-half kms. More than week ago in Anantnag, a shootout at one end of the market proved at another end of it, retributive for a retired, 65-year-old school teacher, Ahmed Dar.

"Dar," says Muzaffar, a lawyer, "was coming home with rations, the only male of the family after his son's death. Obtaining a freedom from the Indian government, he now received a CRP bullet accurately in the forehead."

Three incidents of blind, unhinged action took place in the heart of Srinagar itself, last week. A CRP patrol attacked by militants and a couple of jawans apparently dies.

To teach an object-lesson, the wounded forces struck back a fair three kms off at Mashali Mohalla, torched one houses, and allegedly, selectively gunned down people unconnected with the first shootout.

On Monday, August 13, two Kashmiri sisters, Zuni and Zubeda, urgently set off to a doctor's prompting them a beat the curfew. Soon enough, a CRP mobile patrol unprovokedly opened fire on the two causing near-death.

On Friday, about 10.30 p.m., a perhaps edgy CRP picket in downtown Srinagar opened fire and killed a boy as he was running and did not apparently respond to their calls to halt.

Coincidentally, a top CRP officer we were visiting that night received the information and swiftly owned moral responsibility for the "wrong-doing", as he saw it, despite his subordinate staff officer's strong, contrary views.

After all then, next day's newspapers carried no mention of the accidental shootout, aside from the usual listing of the militant toll. "*Tabahi macha di hai idhar.*" (They have destroyed everything), said a local bureaucrat.

The administrator, as do others in the valley, inform that parents are trepidant of sending their children to schools fearing being picked up for interrogation by the security forces.

Protective Parents

On the rare day, curfew was unimposed, say, in Srinagar, family members were seen commonly, protectively dropping off the youngster ones at, or picking them up from school. The bureaucrat exclaimed: "It has become a crime to be young."

Of their rounding up, there are stories galore: a local press photographer reveals his brother, a civil servant freshly posted to Srinagar, was taken in by the CRP for defying them by option for the shorter of two queues for cinema tickets.

A chubby, state-government employee sitting by the photographer's side says his brother, too, was taken away by the CRP after routine search of their family home yielded nothing.

"I have repeatedly asked CRP officers at the airport detention centre to level charges against him, but they don't *Mahine se upar sarkari roti kha raha hai, maze main hai* (He has been eating food supplied by the state for over a month. He is enjoying himself)," the officer says.

Thousands of other allegedly have not been so fortunate, coming out of their detentions broken in body (standardly: an arm or leg), but bolstered in mind (usually: the militant way).

"*Uthakar ladkon ko Jammu le jaate hain.*" (They take there boys to Jammu), says an IAS officer who, vainly, petitioned the governor to secure, as a goodwill gesture, the token release of a few hundred detenus on Independence Day.

"Who are the boys who interrogate them?" the officer asks, and answers: "Non-Muslims. Who are the jawans? Non-Muslim. So the incarcerated youth thinks everyone is against him because he is Muslim.

Communal Colour

Indeed, a large section of the population has, not without reason, tagged a strong communal colour to nearly every action of the security forces (contributing to the fundamentalising of an otherwise very-liberal Kashmiri Sufi Muslim society).

"*Agar hum Khan dress phente hain jis se baithne mein asaani hoti hai, to hamen CRP peethti hai.*" (If we wear the Khan dress, which is comfortable, the CRP jawans thrash us" says Tak. The force also takes objection to resident nomenclaturing Anantnag as Islamabad, the district's original name predating the Pakistani capital by well-nigh three-quarters of century.

"*Logon ko,*" says the advocate, "*bus mein pakadte hai, poochete hai, kahan jaana hai? Jab woh kahte hain Islamabad, yani ki Anantnag, to CRP jawan unhe peethte hai.*" (If a bus passenger says he going to Islamabad, meaning Anantnag, he is be laboured by the CRP).

A senior CRP officer confirmed this, saying, "We have told our boys to let Islamabad pass, it is valid. But you know how it is.

Such official finesses is lost both on the "boys" and one the targetted populace. After the Khan dress and Islamabad, the CRP has now tuned anathemic to the full beard that every third Kashmir Muslim sports.

Sheikh Sanaullah, 50, fierce-looking and alone, unafraid to give his name in Srinagr's Rainwari locality, says: "*Dadhi rakhne par pakadte hain aur peethte hain, Blade se dodhi kaat lete hain. yeh kahan ka insaff hai?*" (If we keep a beard, they beat us, cut it off with a blade. What kind of justice is this)?

What, above everything, Kashmirs reckon is singularly balsphemous is the unflinching imposition of Friday, prayer-time curfew which has made Srinagar's princia; jama Masjid out of the bounds for them for nearly half-a-year now.

To check out first hand, "*India Week*" visited the imposing grand mosque Friday last, passing through curfewed main roads which provide access to it. The only sounds issuing from the mosque premises were of barking dogs.

In the funeral atmosphere prevailing, CRP janwans patrolled the perimeter while within, an ungainly lock adorned the imposing main door of the Jama Masjid. A district police officer said the lock had been placed by the Awami Action Committee and smiled and ducked when asked to explain the desertion.

Said a bureaucrat: "I am myself not a religious man but for one who is (pointing to an elderly guest), a Friday curfew can be taken to be a direct attack on his religion. Only in Kashmir do women go to mosques and for months, they have not visited Jama Masjid, Even my wife says, *Kya sarkar chala rahe ho?* (What kind of government are you running)?

The official explanation is that there is no willful attempt to keep *namazis* off their mosques: this is true of most of Srinagar's 700 mosques which lie in the un-curfewed interiors. But not so of Jama Masjid, accessed largely from CRP patrolled main roads.

India Week, Delhi August 24, 1990

India's Kashmir War

The National Front Government's plan to check terrorism in Kashmir, in practice, has turned out to be an exercise directed against the vast mass of the Kashmiri common people, who are being denied the fundamental rights guaranteed under the Indian Constitution, and enshrined in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights to which the Indian Government is a signatory.

A four member team comprising Tapan Bose, Dinesh Mohan, Gautam Navlakha and Sumanta Banerjee, on behalf of Committee for Initiative on Kashmir, during a visit to Jammu and Kashmir between March 12 and 16, 1990, obtained detailed information from a large number of source, including victims, eye-witnesses as well as senior government officials, about indiscriminate killings, arbitrary, arrests, un-lawfull searches unprovoked assaults on peaceful demonstrators and a complete dislocation of normal life due to imposition of indefinite curfew for months together with rare breaks of a few hours. The team found, in the course of investigation, that these abuses have been carried out by the official law-enforcement personnel -- the CRPF (Central Reserve Police Force), the BSF (Border Security Force) and in certain case, by the indian Army, that these cases of blatant violation, but operative extensions of an official policy was evident to the team members when they met senior administrators who justified such actions on the grounds that they were necessary to contain "terrorism."

While the team condemns, as a matter of principle, any form of "terrorism" (in the sense of the use of violence and intimidation by a handful of decision makers, whether among the rulers or the forces of the opposition), it believes that such terroristic actions do not absolve the Indian state of its responsibility to respect and protect fundamental human rights of the rest of the citizens in any part of the Indian Union. The findings of the team reveal that the representatives of the Indian state in Kashmir --- both the civil administration and the para-military forces --- have failed so far to contain 'terrorism', and are instead trying to compensate for that failure by wreaking vengeance on the innocent masses of the valley.

The team's talks with officials (in charge of tackling terrorism) indicated that they suffered from the paranoiac feeling that the entire population of the valley are pro-Pakistani 'terrorists'. Dictated by such suspicious feelings, operations to maintain law and order have invariably led to the alienation of the common people who are subjected to humiliation, discrimination and firings by the security forces. As a result, ironically, the government's plan to suppress 'terrorism' is ending up in a situation where the hitherto non-committed masses are being pushed into a position where they feel that 'independence' from New Delhi as demanded by the assortment of secessionist militant groups --- is the only way of escape from state repression. This feeling was eloquently summed up by a Kashmiri government officer, "Till January 19, I was against the militants. Today, I am for them...."

The team also met Hindu refugees who had migrated from the Kashmir Valley and had taken shelter in Jammu. They said in one voice that they had been persecuted and threatened by militants and the Indian government was not doing enough to suppress the militants. Their feelings can be summed up by the comment made by one of their leader : "It is now a question of recapturing and reconquering Kashmir by the Indian Government." Excerpts from the report.

Major Incidents

The date January 19, 1990 when Jagmohan took over as Governor of Jammu and Kashmir, is regarded as a watershed by many Kashmiris. It is not as if there were no police firings or curfews before Jagmohan's arrival. During Farooq Abdullah's tenure as Chief Minister, there were many occasions when in anti-terrorist operations, unarmed and peaceful people became targets of the security forces, following attacks on them by the militants. On January 8, for instance, 17 people were killed in police firing. Imposition of curfew at frequent intervals was also becoming a regular feature.

But Jagmohan's return to J&K as Governor, signalled the unleashing of state repression on a massive scale. For the first time in the history of the valley, widespread searches and raids by the security forces was instituted heaping untold misery and suffering upon the common people. Since his taking over, there have been at

least three major incidents of firing on unarmed demonstrators leading to deaths of and injuries to hundreds including women and children.

Jagmohan's first day in office was marked by raids and searches conducted by security forces (with the ostensible objective of flushing out terrorists) in the Habbakadal area of Srinagar from midnight of January 19, till morning of January 20. About 400 young people --- both Muslims and Hindus --- were dragged out from their houses, mercilessly beaten and taken away. It is significant that the local civil authorities of Srinagar were never consulted before the raids were conducted. The CRPF and other para-military forces which carried out the raids were on their own, unaccompanied by the local police. The Divisional Commissioner of Srinagar later told protesting demonstrators that he had no knowledge of the raids and searches.

On January 20, when a group of people was proceeding to express solidarity with others who had gathered outside the Divisional Commissioner's office to protest against the atrocities of the para-military forces, they were teargassed. The same night --- January 20 -- curfew was clamped down on the city.

On the 21st, 1,20,000 strong procession, including people from the city's outskirts, passed through the streets of Srinagar, defying curfew and protesting against the illegal searches and arrests. When the procession reached Basant Bagh, in the Gawkadal area, the para-military forces started firing upon them. According to the local police, at least 60 dead bodies were recovered from the spot and taken to the police control room, while unofficial sources claim that more than 200 were killed. We met a survivor whose experiences on that day, as narrated to us, indicated not only the ruthlessness of the para-military forces, but also their anti-Muslim bias. The survivor, Farooq Ahmed Wani, is an assistant executive engineer in the Public Health (Engineering), Water Supply Department of the J&K Government. Listen to his experiences in his own words: "My house is in the Rajbagh area. On the day of the incident, 21st, I was told by a water tanker driver that due to curfew, water tankers were not being allowed to move about and take water to the citizens. I contacted the Superintendent Engineer who told me to go to the police and collect curfew passes for the water tankers and distribute them to the drivers. I went with my curfew pass and

identity card. When I reached Jehangir Chowk (near the High Court complex), I saw a procession coming from the other side of the Amirakadal Bridge. A CRPF man asked me to go away, and when I showed him my curfew pass and told him that I was on my way to the police control room, he snatched away my curfew pass and tore it. I then decided to go to my sister's house in Badshah chowk. I saw another procession moving towards Gawkadal. I joined the women who were marching in the procession, hoping that I will be safe in their company. As we were just about to cross the Gawkadal Bridge, there were two shots. Then the security forces opened fire. I saw several people in army uniform behind me. I wanted to jump into the river to save myself, but fell down on the road. When I started getting up, I saw small boys being shot and falling down into the river. I remained lying for some time till I saw a para-military officer coming, when I lifted my head. I saw him pumping bullets into bodies of the injured who were lying on the road.

A boy, who was trying to hide, was killed under the platform of the bridge. As I lifted my head, a CRPF man shouted: 'He is still alive!' I pleaded: 'I am a government officer. Please don't shoot!' The officer shouted abuses at me and said: '*Islam mangta hai?*' (Do you want Islam?) and fired at me. My back and my hands were injured as I turned to run. I fell down, when the officer left, a few JKAP (Jammu and Kashmir Armed Police) men came and watched me. They were, however, soon chased away by the para-military men. Another para-military officer moved up to me and shouted: '*Tum sala zinda hai --- mara nahi? --* (you are still alive --- not yet deceased?) and aimed his sten-gun at my chest. At this stage, the officer who had earlier fired at me, came up and dissuaded the other officer saying: 'Don't waste bullets on him. I have pumped enough bullets, and he will die soon.' He left after kicking my back. Soon after this a truck was brought, and all of us --- both the dead and the injured --- were piled into it. As I was dragging myself up, that officer said: 'He will die soon.'

I kept on pleading to a constable: 'Save me!' The truck had many bed-rolls. There were 30/35 dead bodies. As there was no space for more, the officer ordered the driver, '*Baki ko nale mein phank do*' (Throw away the rest into the storm and river). A tarpaulin cover was thrown over us, and two security forces people sat upon it. After some time we stopped at a place where we

heard voices speaking Kashmiri. One of the injured among us cried out. The tarpaulin cover was lifted, and we saw a Kashmiri constable, who discovering us alive, said: 'My God! There are living bodies here....' Those of us who were still alive, pleaded: 'Please save us!' The doctor on duty in the police control room identified three other people who were still alive, put us in the ambulance and rushed us to the Bone and Joint Hospital. "We later heard that the headconstable who saw us --- the living piled up with the dead in the truck -- had suffered a heart-attack."

Farooq Ahmed Wani showed us his arms and back, where six bullets were pumped in. He has released from hospital after operation. But there are other victims of the January 21st firing who are still recuperating in the Bone and Joint Hospital in Srinagar, whom we interviewed during our trip. Qasim Rashid (32) who is lying in the hospital with his legs in plaster, told us that as he was coming out from his home in Srinagar, the CRPF fired at him and he received two shots in his legs. He was then beaten for hours by the CRPF jawans; when he tried to complain to a CRPF officer about the misbehaviour of the jawans, the officer put a revolver to his head, and asked him to say that he was injured in "cross-firing". He was later thrown at the gates of the Bone and Joint Hospital.

Doctors at the hospital told us that Qasim's case was not an isolated one. They were getting 300 cases at the OPD every day after January 20, as against the earlier number of 30. Dr. Najib, Medical Officer in the hospital, told us that the hospital staff who were used to treating normal bone injuries were not quite equipped to treat injuries caused by high velocity bullets. It was victims of such bullet injuries who were being brought to the hospital now. "They are like war casualties", he said. Dr. Najib added that many among the injured were left unattended for hours in the streets, and lost a lot of blood before they reached the hospital. Due to the curfew, many could not even reach the hospital.

The second major incident occurred on January 22, when people came out in large numbers from all parts of the valley and congregated at Srinagar to protest against the killings of the previous day. The procession was allowed to proceed till it reached Alamgiri Bazar in the hawal area of the town. Here the demonstrators were trapped between a CRPF force in the front and another behind. They were fired upon by the CRPF and according to

unofficial sources again, about 100 people were killed. The injured were taken to the nearby Kashmir Institute of Medical Sciences in Soura by the people, who complained that the paramilitary forces tried to prevent them from moving the injured to the hospital. One of those killed was 32 year old Mohammed Ajlal Hassan, a well-known Kashmiri research scholar, author of four books, including one on Gandhi's non-violence. We interviewed one among the injured - 24 year-old Merajuddin Najar - at the Bone and Joint Hospital. He was shot at Tankipora, where the CRPF fired upon demonstrators protesting against searches and raids. We learnt that the CRPF also fired upon local policemen, allegedly killing one in the Takipora area, as a result of which the JKAP personnel raised protest slogans in the police lines and many of them deserted their posts.

Although all through February, police firings and pitched battles with anti-Indian militants continued, there was a brief respite from curfew during which time huge processions were taken out on the streets protesting against the Indian government's deployment of security forces. Almost every day, surging crowds demonstrated before the office of UN Military Observers Group in Srinagar to submit a plethora of memoranda demanding the implementation of the UN resolution providing for plebiscite.

The third major incident took place on March 1, when a record number of people according to our sources - converged in the streets of Srinagar demanding independence. At three different places -- Zakura, Tangpura-Bemina bypass and Shalimar - the Indian para-military forces opened fire on people, killing and injuring a large number. The injured whom we interviewed in the hospital, claimed that their procession was peaceful and that the firing were unprovoked. At Tengpura, the demonstrators were returning home in buses, when the military forces stopped them and asked them to disembark. As they were climbing down, they were shot dead. One of the survivors, Mohammed Aslam (30) gave us an eye-witness account of how army vehicles stopped their bus, brushed aside all pleadings by the passengers, and fired indiscriminately. Aslam escaped death by tilting on one side, and got injured in his left ankle. He saw scores of people with bullet injuries in their throats and blood gushing out.

Following widespread protests against the killing of bus passengers at Tengpura, the army conducted an inquiry into the incident under the direction of the government. The report of the inquiry sought to justify the killing on the grounds that the people had pelted stones at an army vehicle carrying school children of military personnel. Local people whom we interviewed dismissed the inquiry report as blatantly false, since all the schools in the valley were closed at the time for winter holidays. Besides, there was no army school any where near the spot where the firing took place. Incidentally, the J&K government issued an order on February 20 asking schools, colleges and other educational institutions to remain closed till March 15. Surprisingly enough, the government has now ordered for registration of cases against the erring military personnel involved in the incident at Tengpura.

The same day, army jawans opened fire on a procession of 10,000 to 15,000 people at the Zakura crossing, killing and injuring several people. Bashir Ahmed (22), one of the injured told us that army vehicles forced their way into the procession and fired from sub-machine guns. His right lower arm around the elbow was shattered.

According to an FIR filed by the Srinagar city SSP, M.A. Chowdhry, four army vehicles came towards the procession as it was passing through the Zakura crossing. A police constable, Abdul Rehman (No. 1497/s) advised the army people to stop, or change their route. They did not comply and forced their way into the procession, which according to the FIR, was "peaceful". An army personnel snatched away a flag from the hands of an old man at the front of the procession. The army personnel then started to fire indiscriminately, killing two on the spot. Others from among the army people also started firing. About 100 rounds were fired in all, resulting in innumerable deaths. (FIR filed at Zakura police station on March 1, 1990 in the presence of Mr. Ghulam Abbas, Dy. Commissioner, Srinagar, ARC - police No. 89, 899204 - Register No. 2 Roznamcha, March, 1, 1990. Thana: Police Chowkie, Zakura).

By all indications, it appears that the killings on March 1, in which army personnel were involved, were on a massive scale. Doctors at the Kashmir Institute of Medical Sciences told us that they saw more dead people than injured on that day. A large number

of them were children and boys in their early teens. Among the survivors we saw a number of boys whose legs had to be amputated.

From our investigation into these three major incidents, we found that the para-military forces and the army jawans had no excuse of self-defence (as normally given when dealing with riotous mobs) when they fired indiscriminately upon what were largely peaceful crowds of unarmed demonstrators. A savage thirst for blood seemed to have gripped the CRPF, as evident from the calculated manner in which they went about pumping bullets into bodies of injured people in the Gawkadal area on January 21. The brutalities perpetrated by the army jawans on March 1, call for serious disciplinary action against them. Attempts by the army authorities to justify their killing of bus passengers at Tenggura on that day, by inventing a false story, are a further blot on the country's defence forces who are required to be a highly disciplined cadre dedicated to the task of protecting our people. We urge upon the government to institute judicial enquires into the three major incidents and punish the personnel of the para-military forces and the army who were responsible for the killings.

Atrocities

While the major incidents described above, accounted for the largest number of casualties, there have been innumerable cases of daily raids on houses, assaults on peaceful demonstrations (often resulting in deaths and injuries), firings on innocent bystanders indiscriminate arrests and harassment of ordinary citizens at the hands of the security forces. We are giving a few instances.

On March 7, 1990 at Chhanpora, following firing by militants on the CRPF, the latter raided the houses in the locality. We visited the area on March 14, and interviewed the victims - mainly women who were molested and raped by the para-military forces. Noora (24), wife of Abdul Rehman Khan, told us that she was working in the kitchen in the morning that day, when she heard sounds of firing outside. Soon after that some twenty CRPF personnel walked in, dragged her out, and raped her. She added that her sister-in-law (Zaina) was also raped. She saw two girls - Gulshan (14) and Fatima (16) molested by the CRPF. An elderly lady, Ayesha, wife of Samad Ganai, tells us that when the CRPF assaulted her son, the daughter-in-law, Maymoona, tried to rescue

him. the CRPF threw her down, but she managed to escape by getting up and jumping out of the first floor window. The male members of the affected families in Chhanpora told us that they had sent away their womenfolk to places outside the areas to escape humiliation by the CRPF personnel, who still came to the locality everyday harassing the inhabitant. At least 15 families had left their homes, We were told that of the residents - Abdul Majid had been taken away by the CRPF along with his father Ghulam Muhammad Sheikh. Their whereabouts are not known till now. The residents took us around the locality and invited us to their houses, where we saw household goods destroyed by the CRPF-broken - TV sets, radios, glass utensils and mirrors strewn all over the place.

On March 14, when our team was present in Srinagar, curfew was lifted for a few hours in the morning. We saw women - some with their faces veiled by 'Burqa', other with 'chadars' on their heads - coming out in processions in the streets. They were members of a women's organization called "Dukhtarani-Millat", carrying banner demanding "independence" and the withdrawal of Indian security forces from Kashmir. The immediate reason for their demonstration that day - they told us later - was to protest against the CRPF atrocities on women in Chhanpora on March 7. We found the demonstration peaceful. But when they were moving towards the office of UN Military Observers Group, they were stopped by the police who lathi-charged and tear-gassed them. They ran helter-skelter, and took refuge in the mosque nearby. They were not spared by the CRPF jawans who entered the mosque, beat them and smashed up the furniture in the mosque. Incidentally, as the women were marching towards the UN office, we heard the police announcing over loud-speakers that the curfew was being reimposed - even before it was due.

It is not only peaceful demonstrators who are being attacked by the para-military force, we found that even doctors, going around in the normal course of their duties, are not spared. During our visit to the Kashmir Institute of Medical Sciences on March 14, senior doctors narrated their experiences at the hands of the para-military forces. Body searches have become a regular affair. On March 2, as the doctors were coming to the hospital in an ambulance van, they were stopped by the para-military forces who pointed guns at their heads. Although they showed their curfew passes and identity cards,

each one of them was frisked. Two women doctors - Dr. Shugra Kaul and Dr. Vijay Tikku - were humiliated to such an extent that they had stopped coming to the hospital complex, doctors and attendants are searched every time they move out to collect medical equipment from the stores. Packets of sterilized linen wrappers, among other things, are the main targets of the paramilitary personnel who, on suspicion that they contain explosives, prise them open, thus exposing them to contamination.

At the Bone and Joint hospital, a nurse complained to us that she and her colleagues were insulted by CRPF patients in the hospital, apart from being searched by the para-military forces when outside. This perhaps explains why the staff in the hospitals in the valley refuse to take patients from among the Indian para-military forces.

It is the common patient who suffers the most due to harassment by the para-military forces. We were told about people taken seriously ill, and pregnant women being turned back from the hospitals by the security forces who man the roads leading to them. The height of cruelty was demonstrated by the para-military forces on January 22, when doctors of the Institute of Medical Sciences sent four ambulance vans to a neighbouring locality where firing had taken place, to collect the injured victims. All the drivers came back as patients after having been severely beaten up by the para-military forces who did not allow them to take the injured people to the hospital.

We also came to know about arrests of young people whose whereabouts are not known. Seventeen among those arrested earlier have been transferred to jail in Bhilwara in Rajasthan.

We found that the daily lot of the ordinary citizens of the valley - the raids and searches, the threat to their lives even when they come out on curfew being lifted - has hardened their attitude towards the Indian government in general and the para-military forces and the army jawans in particular. They regard the latter as an occupation force. We could understand their mood when we heard a pathetic story about a woman with a sick child on her way to the hospital, who was stopped by the para-military forces. They were reported to have shouted at her. "Let the child die. There will be one militant less."

What We Saw

The People's Union for Civil liberties (PUCL), New Delhi, the Citizens for Democracy, New Delhi, the Radical Humanist Association, Bombay and the Manav Ekta Abhiyan, had appointed a Joint Team to visit Kashmir and make a first-hand assessment of the situation there. The team comprised Shri V.M Tankunde, Rajinder Sachhar, Amrik Singh, Balraj Puri, Inder Mohan, Ranjan Dwivedi, N.D. Pancholi and T.S. Ahuja. The first visit was from 9th to 13th March and the second from 28th to 3rd April 1990. Both Srinagar and Jammu were visited as also a few outlying towns.

Groups of individuals from all walks of life such as lawyers, businessmen, retired officers, government employees, journalists, intellectuals and other well-known citizens met us on their own initiative. Simultaneously, we visited quite a number of areas with their cooperation. The places where we went included GawKada, Zakura, Sonwar, Pir bagh, Maharaj Gunj, Chhanpura, Basant Bagh, Chhota Bazar, Zainakadal, Zero Bridge Mosque, Raj Bagh Mosque, Batamalu, Khrew, Bones and Joints hospitals at Burzula, S.M.H.S. Hospital, Institute of Medical Sciences at Saura, also Shah Hamdan Mosque and Eid-Ghah. Everywhere large crowds awaited us varying between 350 to 500 in numbers. They included women, adults and youth.

Excerpts from the report.

A large number of excesses were brought to our notice. Some of them are heart-rending.

In Anantnag which was visited by one member of the team, it was alleged that an injured person was brought to the door-step of a doctor for medical attention. Neither was the injured person allowed to enter the clinic nor was the doctor allowed to come out to attend to him with the result that he died.

On 23-3-90 at about 8.30 A.M. (at a time when curfew was not in force) security forces fired without any provocation upon a three-wheeler and a Matador van. This led to several deaths

including that of a pregnant woman and her eight year old son. We visited the injured husband in the hospital and got the full story from him.

On 31-3-90 a group of children in the age group 11-12 assembled at the house of a teacher to have tuition from him in Vicharnag locality of Srinagar. The teacher was non-Muslim and all students except one were also non-Muslims. There was an incident in the vicinity and the CRPF men burst into a house. The CRPF men asked the identity of the pupil with their names. Only the Muslim boy was shot and killed.

Again 1-4-90 after a CRPF jawan of 77 Battalion was killed, some of them sought revenge on uninvolved person far away from where the incident had occurred. At 7.30 A.M. on 1-4-90 (when curfew had been relaxed) a CRPF ambulance fired in the locality of Navapura injuring five person including two women. Subsequently, one woman died. The other persons were three boys aged 15 to 17. The person who tried to take injured to the hospital were beaten and arrested. One of them Mr. Latif Ahmad showed the marks of beatings all over his body, which he had received for helping the injured. We reached the scene of incident within three hours of its happening. We also found 25-year old Fida Hussain with a bullet in his thigh but afraid to go to the hospital on account of being arrested or killed by the army. We ourselves took him to the hospital where we saw many people lying with bullet injuries.

On the same day when we were returning from Navapura to go to other areas of incident we were stopped on the way in Gojwara Tulwari Mohalla where barely 15 minutes before the jawans of the 77 Battalion had gone berserk, entered various houses and had beaten and manhandled the local people. We saw several person lying in the houses with fresh injuries and were told that besides beating them, their cash was also looted by the security forces. The 69th Battalion attached to that area did not even know what was happening. However, it did interfere later and prevented further torture to the local people.

The reports of such incidents were pouring in and we were asked to visit several places in order to see the continuous rampage going on. But due to paucity of time it was not possible for us to visit each and every place.

We met several injured person in the hospitals. Ghulam Qadir from Bijbihara, a 20 year old person, while he was opening his shop during curfew relaxation at 8:30 a.m. on 24-3-90 was fired upon by the security forces injuring his right hand. Shri Bashir Ahmed, from the same place, a gardener in the state Govt. Garedn department was shot on 26-2-90 at the main market. Nazir Ahmed was lying with an amputated leg from bullet injuries. He, a student of 9th class, was going to join a peaceful procession to be held at Charari-Sharif, about 35KM from Pampur in a truck with 40 person on 22-2-90. There was no curfew at that time. He told that he alongwith others was asked to get down by the security forces on the way, and despite "our pleas of being innocent, we were fired upon," Three person, Farooq Ahmad (driver), Manzoor Ahmad and Ghulam Mustafa died on the spot. Five boys were injured.

Mr. Shahzada Mehmood from Saharanpur and working as a hawker in Gurgari Mohalla, Srinagar, nearly for the last 15 years told us that he was shot at 9.30 p.m. in th waist by the CRPF without any provocation or warning.

Two victims of Anantnag were lying injured in the emergency ward. We also saw victims of mini bus shooting. Shiri Shakil Ahmed, a second year student of S.P. College had bullet injury in his thigh.

In fact, the hospitals were full of the injured persons and we were pressed by numerous relatives and friends of the said injured ones to come to the relevant bed and listen to the story of horror perpetrated by the security forces on them. However we were told that neither any compensation was provided to any of the victims of the firing by the para-military forces nor the government had taken any care to investigate such incidents and reasons for such injuries. Nor any compensation was given to the families of those Muslims who were killed in firing by the security forces.

When some of these incidents were brought to the notice of senior officers, in certain cases they were acknowledged and in several other cases they did not even know. There appears to be no system whereby individuals who suffer can lodge complaints and seek redress.

Kashmir : Lives on the Line

SHEKHAR GUPTA

Several pitched battles in the last six weeks have resulted in the death or capture of around a hundred infiltrators [Freedom fighters]. Each encounter brings more work for the security agencies' Joint Interrogation Centre in Srinagar and swells their inventories of captured Kalashnikovs, rocket-launchers, plastic explosives, anti-tank and anti-personnel mines and, lately, cyanide capsules. The cyanide is a recent development.

That may change. Soldiers [Indian] involved in the bloody hide-and-seek have noticed a growing willingness on the part of infiltrators to join battle. Last fortnight they ambushed a security forces partol near Tithwal, killing four soldiers before losing five of their own men in the swift counter-attack. What the Indian forces consider more significant, however, is the encounter earlier (on July 8/9) in the desolate Gulmarg Heights.

An 11-man patrol of the 3rd Battalion of the 'Jammu and Kashmir Rifles' noticed movement in the bushes along a ravine. The junior commissioned officer commanding the patrol and his deputy, a naik, decided to check. Both were cut down by Kalashnikovs. The rest of the patrol took positions, radioed the base and waited for reinforcements.

This batch belonged to Hizb-ul-Mujahedin, the most Islamic and pro-Pakistani group. An account of the group's suicidal journey comes from Mushtaq Ahmed Dar, the one caught alive. Shaking with fear, he tells the story of how he was enticed to go to pok by the militants from his village Karalpura. Dar says his handlers told him their idea was to raise an army of one lakh Kashmiri fighters with a stockpile of armaments that would be unleashed on the Indian state at an opportune moment.

Officers say 'the recent encounters including one last fortnight near Poonch in which 34 infiltrators were killed, point to a pattern. Around this core will be built a network of activists good enough to throw the Indian Army off-balance in the event of a conflict or to bleed it white in a long low-intensity conflict. The

weapons carried by infiltrators are not new, but are clean and oiled, almost always with Chinese markings pointing to a single-source supply. another innovation is the anti-tank mine in which an anti-personnel mine can be fixed to make it blow up even under the weight of a light vehicle.

But if the forces today have some confidence, it is partly because of the improvement in intelligence. A network of agents is being strung together from the shreds of a four-decade-old spy system. One of Governor G. C. Saxena's first steps was to bring about some coordination in the functioning of half a dozen security organisations, each with its own intelligence network often working at cross-purposes with the rest. Selective killing of Intelligence Bureau (IB) operators has scared off the rest. The state CID, blighted by mixed loyalties, was a write-off. The BSF was confined to the border, and the army intelligence had its sensors turned across the border.

Some of that is changing now. Driving arrested suspects around in unmarked cars to point out other insurgents, has proved effective. The value of good intelligence is also evident from the fact that the half a dozen or so arms captures in the cities in the past month have all been based on tip-offs, yielding more than the entire neurotic operation of house-to-house searches. "Intelligence is like a shy maiden. It stays away. But once a beginning is made things become easier," says Jameel Qureshi, veteran police officer and advisor to the governor.

India Today, August 15, 1990.

Dark Days, Deadly Nights!

The Committee for initiative on Kashmir sent a team of four women in June 1990, to investigate into the impact of militarization of Kashmir Valley on the lives of the people there, especially the women.

We had earlier sent out a team of four men in the month of March, after the imposition of Governor's rule in Kashmir. Their

report "India's Kashmir War" had roused attention on the violation of Human Rights by the Security Forces and the role of the former Governor Mr. Jagmohan, in perpetrating state repression. The Governor has been changed. But the situation has further deteriorated since the last visit of our team.

Both the Muslim and the non-Muslim population are filled with fear and insecurity today. The new Governor lifted curfew in the first few days. However, within two weeks he reimposed it and soon there were talks about declaring the valley a "disturbed area" and giving the security forces even more of a free hand. Already the morale of the civil administration is low. The authority of the Jammu and Kashmir police has been undermined, and there seems to be no curb or check on the wide scale abuse of power by the security and the armed forces.

Kashmiris have over the years lived in close proximity with the Indian armed forces. They have been witness to turbulent times and to three wars between India and Pakistan. However the people have never experienced military excess except for occasional isolated incidents. The security forces were never looked down upon as "brute animals worse than the troops of Chenghiz Khan", In Kashmir where even eve-teasing was rare every instance of molestation and rape sends shock waves throughout the valley. It cuts against the ethos of the Kashmiri society. Of all the atrocities committed by the security forces, the treatment of the Kashmiri women has embittered the people of the valley the most.

The Indian state seems to be totally oblivious of the logic of militarisation and its consequences. The valley is virtually under army rule and the civil administration seems to be helpless in checking the lawlessness of the security forces which have resulted in untold human suffering and growing alienation of the people there. This has had serious repercussions on the officers of the Jammu and Kashmir government, who soon after the killings on May 21 (when demonstrators carrying Maulvi Farooq's body were shot down) came out with a statement saying that the incident "brought shame to Indian democracy and left a scar on the psyche of Kashmir". They were joined by several senior officers of the Indian Administrative Service of the J&K cadres, both Kashmiris and non-Kashmiris, who in a letter addressed to the governor complained that despite "frantic wireless messages from officers of the state police asking for

instructions to be conveyed to the CRPF to desist from firing on the procession", they were not heeded.

Moreover, from our inquiries into the complaints of women, we found to our distress that women had become particular targets of the security forces. The method and manner of attack on women had a definite pattern. it was almost as though the attacks were pre-mediated as evidents from the numerous case-histories of torture and molestation that we have collected and adduced in our report.

Further, as earlier (India's Kashmir War) suggested, we find it confirmed from our investigations, that members of the security forces quite often give voice to their aggressive Hindu communal bias and anti-Muslim prejudices during search operations and interrogation of common Muslim citizens of the valley, who are invariably suspected as Pakistani agents by the security forces. yet, the Muslims of Kashmir chose to join India and opt for a secular democracy. This has resulted in sense of betrayal on one hand and being pushed to Islamic fundamentalism, on the other.

Our investigations show that the security forces in Kashmir had been given vast powers under notifications which had been kept secret, Enormous sums are being diverted for the militarization of the Kashmir valley. The state government which is bankrupt, has an annual budget for this year of Rs. 12 crores, exclusively for purpose of providing temporary accommodation for the security forces. Since December 1989, more than 120 campaigns of the security forces have been deployed in the valley for internal security, in addition to units of the regular army.

The team consisted of Premila Lewis, journalist, Nandita Haksar, advocate, Suhasini Mulay, film-maker and Sakina Hasan, former principal of the Nawakadal Women's College, Srinagar. An excerpt from the 80-page report.

During the course of our investigations we spoke to many ordinary people such as farmers, artisans, clerks etc. What was very disturbing was the casualness with which the security forces could perpetrate violence. The security forces were allowed to terrorise the people with impunity. The people were never sure which action of theirs would bring down the wrath of the security forces.

Razaq Malik, a farmer in Trehgam, Kupwara district, went to cultivate his field on May 25, 1990. The army soldiers put his head under water and held it down. They kicked him saying that he should not be wandering outside his home.

We met Mr. Mohammed Shafi Baba at the office of a journalist. His head was bandaged and in a sling. He had come there hoping for a lift home as the journalist as he lived in the same areas. Mohammed Shafi was going by bicycle to attend his duty in the morning at 8.00A.M. On June 12, 1990. He is a switchboard operator in the Power Development Department posted at Rawalpora. He was stopped at the CRPF Gojwara checkpost near the Jamia Masjid police station. He showed his curfew pass No. 015046 issued on 10.5.90. and valid for the months of May and June. He also showed his I.D card with an attached photo stating clearly that he was a switchboard operator in the Power Development Department. Rawalpora. For no reason the CRPF jawans started beating him with sticks. They hit him on the arms and legs with rifle butts. He left his cycle and tiffin box behind and ran into the police station. The local police dropped him off in the city centre at Lal Chowk. He took an autorickshaw and went to the government hospital for bone and joints surgery in Burzalla, Srinagar, for treatment.

His job in the Power Department is considered to be an essential service and action can be taken against him under the Essential Services Maintenance Act if he fails to report for duty. he told us that the Power Department is severely under - staffed and the Executive Engineer takes a stern view if people don not report for duty.

Ghulam Hasan Mohju, 65 has a shop in Bagh-e-Islam. When a member of our team met him on June 11, 1990 he was still in bandages. He told us about the search of his house and the subsequent torture by the CRPF.

"The CRPF surrounded my house between 3 A.M. and 4.00 A.M on June 2. They searched the house, my wife, 5 daughters, one year old son and crippled servant also". The CRPF arrested him blind -folded him, tied his hands behind his back and took him to the Doabagh. Interrogation Centre in Sopore, about 50 kms from Srinagar. They demanded that he give up his weapons and accused

him "Mujahideen (Militants) come to you ," I told them I have nothing. They took him to another room, stripped him naked, hung him by his hands and beat him with sticks." I could tell them nothing. "He was then laid on his stomach, spread eagle., One soldier stepped on each hand, shoulders and neck with their boots on. He was hit with their canvas belts, that have brass buckles. "I could tell them nothing because I knew nothing. I told them, spare me, I am an old man," He became unconscious. When he came round he was untied and given water and food. The beating started again. "When I was almost finished, they rested me for half an hour. Then hung me up again, feet tied, and beat my feet with iron rods till the blood ran out. I was left hanging and naked all night. Next day it started again. Now they put chilli powder in my eyes, mouth, nose, anus and private part. I begged them to take my money and buy the weapons, they said I was hiding."

On the third day of torture his stool was blocked. They told him that they would beat him till he died. "Finally in desperation, I told them I had two sacks full of weapons- but first they must call me a doctor. The doctor came and some medication was provided. When he was asked about the weapons he said that he had lied to save his life. Again the beating started. Again I said, "Yes I have weapons" and fell unconscious. A three star officer came in and I told him "If I tell you lies you stop and at the truth you beat me". Then they made him wear a uniform. He was put in a jeep and was brought back to Baramulla around 5 a.m.. They dug the grounds and searched his house, and took him back. Again the beatings started. "Then they hand cuffed me and threw me in a rubbish heap thinking that I was dead. Two days later finding me still alive they took me to Sopore police station and left me there."

We spoke to a young engineering student who had just finished his exams and is now awaiting his results. He told us about his relatives and friends who were badly tortured. He requested that his name may not be given. Tasneef Wani: a 24-year young man whose father is a retired professor and an old National Conference worker. Tasneef is a BSc final student at the S.P. College Srinagar.

Tasneef and his younger brother Owais, aged 20 years, were picked up on April 30, 1990. It was the month of Ramzan and the brothers were awake early in morning for "Schri". The army came in

three jeeps and one truck along with a women squad to their house in Srinagar.

Both the boys were blindfolded and taken to the old Airport Interrogation Centre. Here they were severely beaten. The younger brother was interrogated about the activities of the elder brother. From their questions, Owais realized that they were questioning him in connection with the killing of Mr. Khera, the managing director of H.M.T watch factory, who had been killed by the militants a few days earlier.

Owais and Tasneef were tortured and interrogated for three days. Owais was again blindfolded and dropped off at Chashma-e-Shahi on the Dal Lake. Tasneef was then transferred to the Hari Niwas Interrogation Centre. Here he was further tortured. He was stripped naked, given electric shocks on his body, and burning cigarettes were pressed into his fingers.

This interrogation continued for days together. He was released on 31-5-90. Tasneef has still not recovered. He is unable to speak coherently and his speech slurs as he talks. Usually he keeps very quiet and is unresponsive to people.

Nazir Ahmed Mir belongs to an influential family in Srinagar. He himself is a registered contractor with the Government of India at the Hydro Electrical Power Project at Uri.

He was at home, waiting to take his morning cup of tea at 8 a.m. on May 28, 1990 when he saw about 20-30 soldiers coming towards his house; which is half a kilometre off the main road. They were from the Rampur Bridge, Sikh Regiment from the Boniyar Camp, under Lt. Colonel Shiv Puri. The Lt. Col. told him that he had to go with them and allowed him to change.

As he stepped out he was blindfolded and his hands were tied behind his back. He was taken to a barrack and made to wait. About half an hour later, he was stripped naked and electric shocks were applied all over his body. They beat him with hunter (whips) on one side of the body and gave him electric shocks on the other (he showed us marks on the ankles, wrists and shoulders). He was given 12-13 shocks a day. He was also beaten with wooden planks (He showed us marks on the sides and his back).

This went on for about 3-4 hours. He was kept blindfolded and his hands were tied, but due to the beating his bandages had slipped a little. He lost consciousness and when he came to, the process started again. They began asking him, "where is the mall' (goods) you carry for the militants? The Kalashnikovs, pistols and rocket launchers." He kept pleading his ignorance saying, "I am innocent, I know nothing. You can shoot me if you have even a shred of evidence against me."

He was continuously blindfolded with his hands tied behind his back. "When I was desperate for nature's call, I was taken out, but forced to urinate inside the cell. For this they paid no heed."

Early on June 1, 1990 they made him sign several sheets of paper, and took his finger prints. They informed him that since he refused to co-operate with them, he was being taken to Srinagar.

"They took me to Srinagar somewhere near the old airport. I could hear the planes and screams of other people. This was an interrogation centre".

The same conditions existed there as well. On the first night he was not tortured. he was given some rice, and roti to eat. The next day, at around 10 a.m. (the gong struck the hours) the interrogation started again. He was taken to some other place.

An order was given to strip him. His hands were untied. His shirt and vest were removed. On his condition, the officer present said, "Do not touch him. He has been treated very cruelly. He is in a very bad shape."

He was questioned again. He was abused, kicked and punched and sent back to the cell. Food and water were given but no medicines. "Your medicines will come from Pakistan," said a doctor who came to examine him.

Nazir Ahmed Mir was kept for five days. His brother told us that in the meanwhile Mr. Jamil Qureshi (advisor to the governor, incharge of law and order) was approached. He sent a D O to the Director General J&k Police. Mr. Saxena, directing him to find out Mr. Mir's whereabouts, and release him at once, if there was no evidence against him. The Director General deputed an S.P. to trace Mr. Mir. he was traced on June 5, 1990.

"On 5th at 10 a.m. some officers came to me and called out my number, 748 and asked my name. I told them, "Nazir Ahmed Mir from Baramulla." They told him, "First you must say *Bharat Ki Jai*, and we expect that this slogan will remain branded on your heart until you die. And you will act upon our advice as a true Hindustani if you want to live."

That evening the camp officer came and told him to go with him. He was still blindfolded with his hands tied behind his back. They gave him some clothes and chappals to put on. He was then taken some distance in a vehicle and asked to get down. The officer told his driver to turn back.

He was put into another jeep. On the way he was questioned about his background and family. Then his blindfold was removed ; and hands untied. He then recognized the officer. "He was Sardar Satnam Singh Oberoi, S.P. Jammu and Kashmir Police. I had met him before. He spoke to me gently and asked me how I knew him. I told him where we had met and broke down in front of him. He asked me where I wanted to go. I told him and he brought me to my brother's house and handed me over to him. "Nazir Ahmed Mir was released on June 6, 1990 at 6 p.m.

We heard many more stories of torture, extra judicial murder, and illegal arrests and detention by the security forces. Many younger men who were picked up failed to return. There is no count of how many "missing" persons there are.

Fear, insecurity and uncertainty loom large over the green fields and snow-peaked mountains of Kashmir Valley.

Reproduced from "*Kashmir Imprisoned Committee for Initiative on Kashmir*", New Delhi July 1990.

What is Happening in Kashmir'

Today, Kashmir is a war-torn state. It is a war being waged by Kashmiri people under the leadership of various militants organisations for an independent nation. However Prime Minister VP Singh declared that his government would never allow Kashmir to secede nor would it

spare those fanning the struggle. In accordance to the declaration, Indian government deployed huge military and paramilitary troops who are wreaking havoc in Kashmir. Beginning with the appointment of Jagmohan as the governor in January this year, not a single day passed in Kashmir Valley without gun fire at some place or the other. After hundreds of killings and thousands of arrests, Kashmir today presents the look of a country devastated by enemy occupation.

In India, except for a handful of revolutionary groups and some intellectuals who espouse the right to self-determination, mainly due to the vicious propaganda being carried out by the Indian ruling classes, even the leftist parties, who once extended their unequivocal support to all the nationalities struggled including that of Kashmir, have changed the tune now and are condoning the government line in a shameless manner.

All those who are supporting the Kashmiri movement or just opposing military atrocities are being branded as anti-national while those supporting the brutal repressions are being hailed as great patriots. In fact, the ruling classes who created a situation were to be considered patriotic or not, one has to be judged by his supporting or opposing a nationality struggle, especially of the Kashmiris. Even an internationally respected human rights organisations like Amnesty International was banned entry into Kashmir and Punjab just because it attempted to bring out the truth in an objective manner.

Moreover, the government is desperately trying to prevent any kind of national and international support going to the people of Kashmir. By claiming Kashmir to be an internal matter of India in which no external force, not even United Nations, could interfere, Indian government has effectively cordoned off the state. On the other hand, a draconian press censorship was imposed so that no impartial news could get out and India could continue with its propaganda unchallenged the burden of which is that only a few groups of terrorists, not masses are creating disturbances with the military and financial support of Pakistan. Highlighting only the killings and kidnappings of a few officials the government is trying to pull a mask over mass upsurge of Kashmiri people so that their legitimate aspirations could be appreciated by the common masses in India. The religious bigots like RSS, BJP and Shiv Sena are striving hard to mobilise the majority Hindus against Kashmir. The print and other media also is trying to depict the movement as destabilising.

But in reality, Kashmiris are able to view Kashmir only as a colony of India. Even judging by the sporadically truthful accounts leaking out to the press, it is clear that those fighting against the central government are not a handful of Pakistan agents as being projected by the ruling classes and their propaganda is merely an attempt to isolate and finish off the movement in Kashmir. **PEOPLE ARE STEADFAST IN THEIR STRUGGLE.**

Meanwhile the repression being carried out became greatly intensified with the advent of Jagmohan who soon became a man everybody love to hate. The paramilitary forces he brought along with him plunged the valley in a pool of blood. People did not stop protesting even amidst repression. In a curfew defying procession taken out in Srinagar against illegal searching, attacks and abductions of youth, nearly 20,000 people participated. The procession was fired upon at Basant Bagh resulting in killing of two hundred unarmed people including women and children. The very next day, another hundred were killed in firing on another protest march of 30,000 people in Maisuma. Nearly half a million people marched to the United Nations Office in Srinagar on March 1st. It was peaceful demonstration demanding independence. But it was surrounded by CRPF who mercilessly shot dead hundreds of people.

Thus, people are participating in great numbers in the struggle for independence and repulsing the Indian forces slogans like "Indian dogs-go-back!" These are irrefutable evidence of the lack of confidence Kashmiris have in Indian government. However, by focussing their propaganda only on the attacks on government officials and military personnel and ignoring the mass movement, a deliberate attempt is being made to describe the struggling people as terrorists and anti-national elements so that they could get no solidarity from the people and intellectuals of the region.

Kashmiri people are reeling under the brutal repression of the Indian forces. The Indian government which never misses an opportunity to extoll traditions of non-violence, is massacring the Kashmiris by thousands. The frenzied Indian troops are firing upon peaceful processions without any provocation. Even the funeral procession of Mirwaiz Moulvi Farooq was not spared. Long curfews and news black-outs are being used as effective tools to hide the truth from the rest of the world. Ironically, government issues huge advertisements explaining how a one-day bandh would result in loss of hundreds of crores of

rupees. Can it explain how the life is supposed to go on if curfew is imposed continuously for weeks on?

The genocide going on in Kashmir will make any civilised country hang its head in shame. People are being subjected to most horrendous ordeal. Entering every house forcibly in the name of searching, destroying everything in the houses, molesting women, etc. have become daily occurrences. Even engineers, doctors and government employees are constantly harassed on the suspicion of harbouring terrorists. People are picked up arbitrarily and tortured for being Pak agents and terrorists. Just Indians were insulted by the British in India. Kashmiris are being insulted by India in Kashmir. The Indian government which condemned the apartheid in South Africa are practicing their own brand of apartheid in Kashmir.

Bourgeois parties are arguing that if Kashmir secedes India will be weakened and also Kashmir which is very small will be vulnerable to invasion from other countries, especially Pakistan.

However, one would not forget that Kashmir is already under occupation of the Indian rulers. So the nationality fighting for its liberation will not be deceived by such arguments. There are several countries in the world smaller than Kashmir. Similarly there is no sense in saying India become weaker if Kashmir goes away. Only comprador bourgeoisie are being benefitted by Kashmir's accession to India and they are the ones who will stand to lose. The common people of India have no stakes in it.

India is being highly hypocritical in condemning Pakistani hand since it is glossing its own murky role in the affairs of neighbouring countries. When it trained and armed the Tamils fighting in Sri Lanka ; when it helped divide Pakistan using its army in 1971 ; and, when Indian leaders went and made provocative speeches in Nepal recently, nobody seemed to have taken exception to them. Therefore, India cannot be holier-than-thou over the matter of Pakistan's role. When Kashmiris are fighting against India, they have a right to accept or reject assistance from any sources. So all the democratic forces in the country should reject the talk of foreign hand which obscures the main issue of the Kashmir independence.

Today parliamentary parties of all hues are conspiring to exterminate the entire Kashmiri race in order to crush their love of freedom. Ranging from right BJP to left CPI and CPM including

Congress and National Front, are spreading poison about the Kashmiri struggle and supporting the brutal acts of military and para-military forces. In this set up, one can attribute the stand of other parties to the classes they represent, but what about 'reds'? After betraying the revolution long time back, they have been faithfully serving the ruling classes for forty years and in the process degenerated to a stage where they could lick the feet of anybody who could help them get a few parliament seats. As a proof of their compliance, they praised IPKF which was no more than a mercenary army in Sri Lanka; competing with each other in helping nab the terrorists to receive platitudes from a police demon like Rebeiro; they have been egging on various state governments to take sterner steps in dealing with the revolutionary movement. So it is but natural that they should condemn the genuine nationality struggle of Kashmir.

Thus at a time when all the ruling classes are united to plunge Kashmir in a bloodbath, all progressive and democratic forces should come together to save Kashmiris and their liberation struggle. Defeat of Kashmir means defeat of people of all nationalities. Just as Kashmiris are fighting for freedom, other nationalities in India also want freedom to mould their lives themselves. So all of them have a common enemy in the exploitative classes at the centre. It is the historical task of all the people to revolt against the common enemy.

Excerpts from *Kashmir : Rhetoric and Reality* All India Revolutionary Students Federation, Karanataka, August 1990.

Stop Repression

Anti-freedom fighter operation in the valley has acquired the character of military operation against the people of the valley and makes no distinction between the militants and the masses.

Gross and persistent violation of the Human Rights and the Fundamental Rights of the people of the valley is a patent fact of life and the security forces are virtually a law unto themselves, causing a feeling of total insecurity among the people.

Such atrocities and excesses are counter productive and have caused alienation almost to the point of no return and made a political dialogue far less the revival of political process impossible. There is a political vacuum as all known political leaders are living outside the valley or under detention.

The frequency and intensity of atrocities against the civil population, especially after the promulgation of J & K Armed Forces Special Powers Act, have wiped out the line of distinction between the Central Government and the State Government or between the State Government and the operational force involved. There is virtually no civil administration.

No exact statistics of the number of people killed or missing of those detained, released or under detention of those injured, tortured or maimed of women raped or molested, or of houses or shops and structures destroyed are available. The vacuum is filled by rumours and exaggerations.

The state government have not compensated even the innocent victims like the infants or the aged.

The economic life remains paralysed : tourism is at a standstill; there are pockets of scarcity in Srinagar itself. The daily wage-earners have been badly hit. Cases of deliberate destruction of edible stocks have come to notice.

The people feel that while they are being killed, humiliated and starved and while we claim Kashmir to be an integral part of India, no one cares, no one expresses concern, no one criticises the military action or demands its halt.

The delegation suggests that :

(a) In order to restore normalcy, the Central and the State Governments, (1) must concentrate the security forces on or along the Line of Actual Control, the highways and the strategic installations and withdraw them from the inhabited areas, particularly in the interior of the towns, (2) limit the curfew to the night hours between the Isha and Fajr prayers, (3) permit peaceful processions, (4) institute judicial inquiries in the cases of alleged atrocities, (5) announce a scheme of compensation for loss of life, limb and property, (6) withdraw J & K Armed Forces Special Powers Act: (7) publish lists of persons detained for interrogation or prosecution, and treat those under-detention,

particularly political leaders, humanely, (8) establish the Courts under TADA in every District Headquarters, (9) move the High Court to deal expeditiously with the thousands of *habeas corpus* petitions now pending, (10) stop 'crackdowns' and indiscriminate searches and arrests and organised reprisal raids against Mahallas and villages and bazars, (11) and in one word, restore the Rule of Law.

(b) the PUCL, the PUDR, the CFD, the Gandhian Organisations, the Committee for Kashmir, the Initiative for Kashmir should maintain a permanent presence in Srinagar in order to expose the atrocities and, along with other secular organisations, jointly organise a conference against state terrorism in Kashmir at the earliest with the participation, if possible, of national leaders.

(c) The mass media, particularly the national papers owe it to the people to report objectively on the political and economic situation and expose the atrocities.

Statement issued by a 4-member delegation of *All India Muslim Majlis-e-Mushawarat* which visited Kashmir between September 20 and October 1, 1990.

Protectors or Predators?

Sukhmani Singh

I want to suck their blood but how can I do it?

Ruksana, 16, resident of Baallipora

If you give me training I will kill the men who raped me.

Shaila 22, resident of Pazipora

Whenever I see an army man now I feel like jumping into a grave. Rabia, 29, resident of Kupwara.

These are the bitter, angry outbursts of Kashmiri women who have been sexually assaulted. Ironically enough, by the keepers of law and order--the Indian army and security forces, stationed in the Valley since January this year to curb the growing terrorist menace.

Today, the sight of a man in uniform both infuriates and frightens them. While villages in the interior have witnessed the highest number of rapes, those close to civilisation have not been spared either. Three unmarried sisters from a well-respected family in Lal Bazar, a downtown area of Srinagar, were carried off to the cantonment and released after two nights of sexual assault.

More than anywhere else, the number of atrocities have reached alarming proportions in army infested Kupwara, a thickly forested, mountainous district 90 kilometres north of Srinagar, earlier famed only for the beauty of its Lolab Valley. Young girls in the scenic Tregham village (the hometown of Maqbool Butt, founder of the Jammu and Kashmir Liberation Front) are dragged inside their homes alone and subjected to various forms of physical torture--from blows with belts and rifle butts to electric shocks. Eighteen-year-old Mumtaz of Tangwara mohalla had the flesh of her left cheek gouged out, her clothes stripped off and it is uncertain whether she escaped rape. For she has withdrawn into herself. Frightened out of their wits, families from this mohalla hurriedly migrated to a remote village and have just returned to their homes after four months.

In far-off Ledervan, an 18-year-old girl hanged upside down from a tree during interrogation and given a succession of electric shocks, rendering her unconscious. When she came to her senses, she was beaten. Today, she is almost insane. Near Chokibal, another serene village in Kupwara, a couple was arrested and taken to an army camp where the husband was tied to a tree while his wife was raped by jawans. Helpless as he was, he is engulfed by a murderous rage today.

Twenty-five kilometres from the Indo-Pak border is idyllic Ballipora, far-removed from civilisation. The 40 families there lived a life of plenty. But on August 10, their rustic bliss was shattered. On that fateful day, 12 women from neighbouring Pazipora came in running, hotly pursued by dozens of ruthless army jawans. Beating the males with rifle butts, the jawans forced them to leave. After that, they made all the women line up for inspection and pulled aside the youngest and prettiest of the lot. Recounts 50-year-old Saja, whose wrinkled face still bears bluish scars under the eyes, "eight to 10 men would fall upon one woman, tear off her clothes, strip her naked and make her walk. They beat me on my head and

under my eyes with rifle butts, but I didn't allow my two unmarried daughters to be raped."

But not all the women had a Saja to defend them. Half of them were dragged to the field, while the rest were carried into a dirty cowshed. Then, each was raped by nine or 10 men. One of them was pinned down in a field for as long as three hours, her blood-stained shalwar later set on fire by the jawans. Twenty-six-year-old Saja, another victim, sits huddled in a dingy hut in Pazipora with tears running down her cheeks, "I want to kill myself," she cries in a voice choked with emotion. Both her husband and brother-in-law were shot dead by the army shortly before she was raped.

When the women fled their village, the residents of Ballipora came to their aid, lending them clothes and providing them shelter for the night. They returned to their village the next day.

Sixteen-year-old Ruksana, with her plump pink cheeks, expressive hazel eyes and curly brown hair is still stunned by her experience. Though she was lucky to escape from the clutches of the army four times when they came on raids asking for the 12 girls who they claimed had received training in Pakistan Occupied Kashmir (POK), luck abandoned her where, one morning, she was whisked away from her uncle's compound in Ballipora by four uniformed jawans. Taking her to a paddy field, three men stood behind her and held her flailing arms, while the other stood in front, tore her embroidered phiran down the front, and wrenched off her shalwar. "I was totally overpowered," she remarks dully. While two of them held her arms and two others her legs, they were joined by three others and all of them raped her. They held her captive for two hours. Unable to bear the pain and indignity of it all, Ruksana finally lost consciousness. Hours later, her aunt Saja discovered her and carried her home. Physically, it took her 15 days to get back to normal. Psychologically, she is still a wreck. Her voice breaks down as she relives the trauma she went through, lips quivering uncontrollably as she mutters, "Whenever somebody mentions the army, I become abnormal, --- I have palpitation. fact, I almost lose consciousness."

A doctor in the Kupwara district hospital corroborates that the five women who were brought to her from Pazipora were all definitely victims of rape. She also holds that although these

particular cases had been registered by the police, many go unregistered as the victim and her family try to keep it secret. Rape, after all, is still a great social stigma. But often doctors and police in the valley are too scared to pursue cases. She herself has yet to prepare the reports of the victims, she examined. She remarks "I heard of one virgin, who had lot of bleeding developed kidney trouble and had to be referred to a hospital in Srinagar. She died there, but nobody did anything."

Mumtaz Wani, an advocate who has been investigating the cases in Kupwara, discloses that the SHO in Velgam police station (under whose jurisdiction Pazipora comes) has recorded the statements and registered the cases of eight victims under section 376 of the Criminal Procedure Code. But now, alleges Wani, "he is under pressure from the SP and the army to close the cases. To date, he sustained the pressure, but is not in a position to investigate the cases."

In dirty Kupwara town, 26-year-old Rabia crouches in a dingy bed-cum-sitting child. There are dark pouches under her grey eyes ; she has a vacant expression on her face. With her unshaven husband standing by sympathetically, she mechanically recounts the events of that dreadful day last month when army jawans stormed their house.

There had been rapid cross-firing the night before and at 5 a.m. that morning, there was an army crackdown in Kupwara. Her husband and brother, like all other males in the locality, were rounded up and marched to the chowk. Catching her alone, three jawans, snatched her baby out of her arms and knocked her to the ground with their rifle butts. They then gagged her with one of her own phirans, tore her *kurta* and raped her. One of them even pressed his foot down on her child's chest so that he could not cry out while they were unleashing their passion. This carried on for an hour, after which she fainted. She is still under gynecological treatment for the wounds which had been inflicted in her genital region.

Tender, innocent Zulekha, 16, resident of Shali Bahata in Kupwara, was walking with her mother on the morning of August, 10, when she was suddenly snatched by some jawans, taken to the forest and raped, while her mother was taken into custody. Late in

the evening, one of the villagers stumbled upon her bleeding and unconscious form. He brought her home but it was too late. She died that night.

Srinagar advocate, Zafar Shah, who is also a member of the Bar Association which is investigating atrocities in the valley, describes the difficulties they face even in getting a case registered. "We try to do so wherever we find a man of conscience. But since the state police department is under eclipse and the army has been given more power, a policeman is scared of displeasing them."

The people of Wadwan, a picturebook village in Badgam district, 20 kilometres from Srinagar, have a similar tale to tell. A convoy of 100 army vehicles drew in at dawn and wrecked havoc on the lives of the peaceful farmers there. Many women in the village were molested in their homes while their husbands were ordered to assemble in the mosque. However, no case has been registered so far. Says N.L. Trisal, district commissioner of Badgam, "I received some complaints that women had been harmed in seven or eight houses during an ambush and that the forces had misbehaved. I approached the additional chief secretary (home) and an inquiry was instituted by the police." How far has the inquiry reached? Trisal admits with refreshing candour, "I have no idea. As the district magistrate and the commissioner, I should get feedback from the police. But all communication between us has been paralysed."

Given this deplorable state of affairs, it is hardly surprising that, at present, only four rape cases and two attempts to rape are being investigated by the authorities, according to the director general of police, J.N. Saxsena. To date, not a single case has been placed before a court of law.

But of all the cases under investigation, action has been taken only on the most highly publicised one--the case of the bride Mubina in Anantnag. In May this year, the bride was travelling by bus with her husband and the marriage party of 27 persons. The bus was fired upon and stopped near Badasgam village in Islamabad district at 11.30 a.m. by a BSF patrolling party. The bride was kidnapped by the jawans, gang-raped and released after 48 hours. The hapless girl had to undergo medical treatment in the district hospital of Anantnag. Gynecologist Dr. Masooda Jan examined her and prepared a medical report on May 18 which proves that she was

raped. Four jawans of the BSF have accordingly been suspended after investigations. No further action has been taken so far.

Similarly, in a rape case in Pulwama district, a junior commanding officer has been demoted and the authorities "plan" to take action against three others. No one has been imprisoned. Another case has been referred to the forensic laboratory. But the stumbling block in all these cases is that in order to conclusively establish a case of rape it is essential for the complainant to appear before the court of inquiry. But the security forces have two options : to appear before a civil court or a court-martial, and most cases have been transferred to the army authorities.

"Under these circumstances," comments Shah with a wry grimace, "which poor, illiterate Kashmiri will be able to depose before a court-martial? She will be afraid that the authorities will repeat the crime."

Even in cases where the girl might appear for a trial, people are skeptical about the outcome, feeling "the armed forces are deliberately trying to create a sense of fear in the minds of the people through atrocities so that they give up the demand for a plebiscite."

The victims doubt if justice will ever be dispensed. For, as one of them remarks bitterly, "They will not allow their forces to face trial because this will lower the morale of the entire force." Judging by the snail-like pace at which investigations proceed, it certainly appears so.

The rise in the number of rape cases in Kashmir has dangerous repercussions. It is breeding more militancy and alienating the populace further. Ever since the first rape case in Chhapora six months ago, it is said that the militants began taking a new vow-*Hamare behan ke tapakte aansoon ke kasam*. Women too are up in arms aching to take revenge. Screams a victim, "*Hum chup nahin baithenge*." Women activists have begun imparting training to girls in the use of knives and boomerages, urging them to aim for a jawan's neck or stomach if he attempts to molest them.

One serious fall-out of this is that those who were mildly anti-Indian have now turned against India, even emotionally, because of what is happening to their womenfolk. As Shah aptly puts it, "If you have economic hardships, you can beg, borrow and

survive. But if you are going through emotional trauma, you cannot take it. So, now, when the man fights, he fights with a vengeance."

The Illustrated Weekly of India Bombay, September 30, 1990.

Kashmir Victimized

Amit Baruah

From December last year, when militant operations began in earnest, to the September, killing of 22 extremists at Thune Village on the Srinagar-Leh highway, much water has flowed down the Jehlum. The conflict has been elevated to the status of a war; officials prefer to call it an 'invisible war'. Responsible officials talk of wars and battles, phraseology not used in the early months of the conflict. Today, personnel of the Central Reserve Police Force and the Border Security Force and the army can be seen almost everywhere in the valley: from the narrow by-lanes of Srinagar to remote picturesque villages.

Yet another feedback from the valley; no section of the population is with the authorities, not even the State Government employees, who have reacted vehemently to the actions of the security forces.

And the crux of the problem lies in the ever-widening gulf between the people and authorities. There is no meeting ground between the vast majority of the people and the government, which makes no distinction between militants and innocents. Think-tanks feel the people can be beaten into submission. But the dangers of using the security force for an indefinite period are there for all to see.

The common man is see thing with anger against the security forces; atrocities have certainly been committed. The people do exaggerate, the local press does play up incident, but even a senior police official admitted; "In such an operational scale, one cannot conform to the rules of the game."

But one does not know if this explanation is satisfactory. Till now, not a single Kashmiri family affected by the trouble has

accepted any relief from the state. And it appears unlikely that they will do so in future. If anything, the continued actions of the security forces have hardened their attitude towards the Government.

The fate of a senior Indian Police Service (IPS) officer of the Kashmir cadre reveals the differences in the approach to the situation. Veerana Avelli, a 1966 batch officer, who was Deputy Inspector General (Anantnag), did not impose curfew on the town after the security forces opened fire on March 1. He informed one of the advisors to the governor that there was no need to impose curfew as there had been no demonstration, there had been no reaction after the incident. The advisor seemed pleased. But Avelli had a rude shock in store for him. Soon afterwards he was told that curfew must be imposed as Governor Jagmohan wanted to "pursue a uniform policy everywhere." The officer tried to explain that there was no provocation to clamp curfew. Avelli was taken aback when another advisor to the governor landed in Anantnag and told him bluntly, "We were thinking of promoting you, but in view of your defiance....." Avelli did not last long in Anantnag. He has vast experience in policing in the state, but unfortunately his tactics were not the same as those running the state.

Time, that all important factor, is running out in Kashmir. And, to state the obvious, the clock cannot be turned back. The people are not with the Government though officials are happy the Valley does not reverberate to cries of Aazadi. But that sentiment is not far away; it is liable to pop up any time.

And how do the people feel about the issue? An ex-serviceman, speaking of the attitude of the security forces, said; "the more you hate us, the more we will rise againstt you." The agitated old man had been ill-treated by a security man while he was going to his fields. The attitude, the "arrogance." of the security forces gets the Kashmiri emotionally worked up. "We have seen the real (colours) of India. We are not going to go back now. "Pointing to the shoes worn by this reporter, the old man said: "You know, we cannot wear such shoes. Our children cannot wear jeans, otherwise they will be picked up for (being) militants,"

Pointing to the rough skin of his feet, another person said that if anyone was found with broken skin, the security personnel said it was because of frost bite, which led to the most "probable

conclusion" that the man had crossed the border and was a trained militant. Some agitated person said: "You go and write this, we are all militants here, men and women. We do not believe in Indian democracy, "Another complaint against the security forces was that they took away money from the villagers. Women who used to go to the forest for cutting wood have stopped doing so because of the fear of molestation.

The confrontation between the insurgents and the security forces is a hard reality. Attacks by militants have made life difficult for security personnel manning the odd, isolated picket in rural Kashmir or patrolling a hostile lane in downtown Srinagar.

The finger is always close to the trigger in Kashmir, a delayed reaction can cost a security man his life. Be it in a patrol vehicle or at a lonely picket, the self-loading-rifle (SLR) has to be on the ready. The difference today is that the security forces are present in strength to reply to militant action. But, it is also a fact that when the number of youth trained in the use of arms was counted in a few hundred at the beginning of the year, the figure today is in thousand.

Frontline, Madras, September 29, 1990.

History Will Not Forgive Us

Sumanta Banerjee

THIRTY years after the German occupation of France, Marcel Ophuls made a film called *le Chagrin et la Pitie* (The Sorrow and the Pity), based on interviews with French citizens, who collaborated with the Nazis. It was not meant to be a witch-hunt. It persuaded a new generation of post-war French youth to discover a hidden and shameful episode of their country's past, when certain sections of academics, editors, politicians and professional people chose to turn a blind eye to the deportation and massacre of Jews.

I sometime wish an Indian film maker produce a documentary of live interviews with our present-day politicians, officials, editors and ordinary citizens, and ask them just one question: how do they look at what is happening in Kashmir today? It can reveal the cruelties and frailties, the ignorance and viciousness

that twist their perceptions about happenings in Kashmir, and distort their attitude towards the crimes being committed there. It can be a valuable record for future generations who may discover how their nation behaved towards a community in what can be called the darkest hour of its history.

The sentiments expressed above are provoked by a recent visit to Kashmir. What I saw in the valley is contradicted by what I read in the newspapers. Am I to believe the relatives of those killed by the BSF in Mashali Mohalla in Srinagar, and the residents of Sirigufwara in Anantanag, whose houses were burnt down by the CRPF? Or, should I accept the assertion made every day by our ministers in Parliament that reports of killings by security forces are false propaganda mounted by the militants? Or, do I take for gospel the even more preposterous claim made by governor Girish Saxena that the arson was the handiwork of the Sirigufwara residents themselves, who wanted compensation money? Should I believe his advisor Jamil Qureshi, who told a press conference in Jammu on August 24 that the militants has been wiped out? Or, am I compelled to recognise the existence of the militants. When soon after Qureshi's claim it succeeded in forcing government employees all over the valley to go on a five-day strike from September 3? Should I just stop at blaming Pakistan for sending subversives into the valley and remain blind to the fact that the BSF jawans manning the borders allow them to come in for a sum of Rs. 700 per person? It is incredible how these questions never occur to the members of our intellectual establishment, who without batting an eyelid gulp down whatever the government or the press chooses to tell them.

The latest term which has become fashionable with government spokesmen to counter allegations of atrocities by security forces in Kashmir, is the expression 'disinformation.' It is being held that the militants are spreading 'disinformation' by concocting stories of atrocities. But let us see, who is spreading 'disinformation' - the militants or the government?

While in Srinagar, I was told by a senior government official that reports of BSF atrocities in Mashali Mohalla on August 6 had no basis whatsoever. I went to Mashali Mohalla and met the resident's there. Most of the 125 families living there had left after the events of August 6. Among the few who still remained, the faces of the survivors, the eyewitness accounts of the relatives of those

killed and the burnt down houses were eloquent testimony to the terror that was unleashed on them. The 75 battalion of the BSF raided the 'mohalla' on the night of the 6th. The provocation, we were told, was an incident of firing by some militants several kilometres away. But instead of the guilty militants, the innocent householders of the 'mohalla' became the targets of the BSF, who ran amuch, burnt at least six houses and killed 12 persons. Among those killed were 65 year-old Ghulam Ahmed Meer and his 25-year old son Fayaz Ahmed Meer. The widow, Halima broke down whole narrating how her son Fayaz was dragged by the BSF jawans and shot thrice in his stomach and chest. Her husband was killed when he was offering 'namaz' [prayer]. Mehbooba, widow of Bashir Ahmed Beg, was sleeping when the BSF entered the house, and shot her husband and two sons, Muzaffar Ahmed (17) and Ejaz Ahmed (10) killing them on the spot. She herself was shot in the chest, but survived. I was taken around the house of Ghulam Qader, 50-year-old farmer, who along with his two sons were shot dead the same night. Bullet holes in the walls of the room where they were killed, and blood stains on the floor were shown as the evidence of the event, by the neighbours.

In Sirigufwara in Anantnag, the CRPF reacted in the same way, when militants fired upon their vehicle as they were passing through a highway on August 10. Instead of apprehending the militants who fired upon them, the CRPF personnel fled the spot. They arrived at Sirigufwara, which is more than one kilometer away from the actual spot, where the militants fired upon them. The residents of the area, left their houses in panic and took shelter in a neighbouring village.

There is no use of repeating what I saw and heard. It is the same story everywhere. Wherever one goes in the valley, one can hear about allegations of gang rapes, killings and incendiary by the BSF, CRPF and Army jawans. Watching the survivors and listening to their tales of woe, moving through the charred remains of their houses and belongings, one feels ashamed of calling oneself an Indian.

All this, of course, can be dismissed as 'disinformation' I can be accused of being misled by the militants, of being an agent of Pakistan! Governor Saxena maintains that the security forces are

doing a great job, and all those who are being killed are actually 'dreaded terrorists'.

When faced with stubborn facts, Saxena and his lieutenants come up with another fashionable phrase- 'caught in crossfire'. Explaining away the killing of innocent people, they claim that they were killed in cross-firing between the militants and the security forces. But it seems that in the CRPF, BSF and army operations, the term 'cross firing' covers a wide distance, both in space and time. On August 10, the militants fired upon a CRPF vehicle at Darrkhan, and the CRPF retaliated by burning houses in Sirigufwars. On the same day, militants opened fire on some army vehicles near Dedikot village in Kupwars. Soon after that, the same army personnel raided Pazipora village and killed 25 people there. They are all being described as victims of 'cross-firing'!

The militants cannot destory the security forces, and the latter cannot liquidate the militants. It is the innocent people, who have to pay the price for this endless war of attrition. The militants by their obstinate actions are indirectly causing more suffering to their own people. Every terrorist act by them invites retaliation from the security forces, who, cowards as they are, wreak vengeance upon the common people. The survivors such vengeance escape, and swell the ranks of the militants. By the government's own admission the number of militants have risen from a few hundreds a year ago to several thousands. To meet this growing challenge, the authorities are deploying more and more forces in the valley. In Srinagar alone, there are at least 22 CRPF companies. In the vicious cycle of attacks and counter-attacks, vengenace and retribution, an entire community is getting burtalised. Children of a once peaceful people, watch grimfacedly the humiliations suffered by their parents, the killing of their elders. Fingers trained to weave delicate patterns on shawls are itching for the triggers of AK-47s. "What will you do when you are grown up?" I asked a 7 year old boy standing desolate in the midst of the wreckage at Sirigufwars. "A mujahed", he replied.'

Meanwhile, we in the rest of the country can think of thousand of ways in which to deny or repress guilt so as to preserve our self-esteem. We can blame Pakistan for sending terrorists to Kashmir. We can accuse the terrorists of misguiding the people of Kashmir. We can dismiss allegations of atrocities as 'disinformation'.

We can go on defending the increasing militarization of administration on the plea of maintaining the 'nation's integrity'.

New Delhi's policy in Kashmir is buttressed by a combination of official 'disinformation' on the one hand, and general public silence on the other, or official complicity in crimes on the one hand and widespread passivity of our intellectuals on the other. How many years will it take us to face our guilt, to purge ourselves of lies in order to be able to look into the eyes of the Kashmiris?

The Independent, Bombay, October 10, 1990.

The Valley in Flames

Shiraz Sidhva

Sangrama was just another picturesque Kashmir town on the Sopore Road. Until the day a portion of it was burnt down. On 15 October, militants opened fire on Border Security Force (BSF) picket. The paramilitary personnel retaliated by setting fire to the main market and some houses nearby. The next morning, Mohammad Subhan Sheikh, 68, rummages through the debris to salvage whatever little he can from his family's three shops. "We have all fled from here, or they will burn us," he cries. Tears roll down his cheeks as he loads charred quilts and pieces of corrugated sheet onto a pony cart. "I have lost eight to ten lakh rupees worth of merchandise! where we go now?"

Basheer Ahmed, a fruit-seller who lives across the street, has large blisters on his feet ; he couldn't escape the devastating blaze in time. It was around 11 in the morning when the men, women and children of Sangrama hurriedly left their homes, some of them fleeing to nearby Choorba for shelter. "They didn't even spare our cattle," says Abdul Khaliq. "What have we done to deserve this ? Even in war, they spare the old, the sick, women and children. But these so-called security forces are worse than animals," he despairs.

The nightmare did not end there. The day after the Sangrama incident, the paramilitary men gutted the market at Sopore following a gun-battle with the militants. The little shops

with residential quarters on top of them were torched--the remains of melted television sets, burnt typewriters and a kiosk that once housed a tailor's shop bear mute testimony to the mindless act. Altaf Hussain, an eyewitness, swears: he saw CRPF men sprinkle gunpowder on the shops and set them aflame. The timber logs in an adjacent saw mill were also set on fire. Abdul Rashid Dar says 'this is not the first time that such a thing has happened--some months ago, the Iqbal Market down the road was gutted too'.

"This is a new form of war-fare' they have started," says Ghulam Nabi, a tailor, whose shop was looted before it was reduced to ashes. "They even took away packets of salt from the provisions store."

Destroying suspected militant hideouts seems to be the only option left for the security forces now. And the easy way out is to set them on fire---at random mostly. "Our men are demoralised," admits a CRPF commandant. "Everybody here seems to be a militant, and they sometimes shoot at us from the most harmless looking houses. Our men don't have either the weaponry of the training to deal with such guerrilla tactics." Asked whether the 'Disturbed Areas Act' actually empowered the paramilitary to set on fire houses and shops, which could be harbouring militants, the commandant corroborated that the Act did give them some powers. Governor Saxena, however, denies this and says he had ordered inquiries into the incidents. Senior paramilitary personnel, however, are confident that the administration will not come in the way of any action taken by them. "Whatever the Governor might say, we are clearly on the defensive," says a BSF commandant. "There may be arrests all the time, but there are an estimated 50,000 trained men in the valley," insist army and police sources. That is over ten times the number that Governor Saxena estimates, officially at least.

Faced with mounting odds, the security forces have chosen to retaliate in the most barbaric way. Consider what happened in Handwara on 1 October. Two BSF personnel were shot dead while they were buying vegetables in the market. Soon after, a BSF convoy was ambushed while passing through the main town bazar. The paramilitary men returned with an entire contingent and set on fire shops and houses on both sides of the bazar. The blaze that raged for the most part of the day gutted 412 buildings, including 31 houses, 55 commercial establishments, 256 shops, four cowsheds, 50

granaries, two trucks, a bus, three taxis and a scooter. Over 25 people died in the fire; many more must have been trapped under the debris. The BSF even refused to let fire tenders enter the town for over two hours. Even the special commissioner of Baramulla and Kupwar, Mr. Phonsong, admitted that: "the firemen were prevented from entering Handwar, and that the "victims were mostly innocent". The police, however, laid the blame entirely on the militants, claiming that the fire was a 'result of firing and the use of hand grenades by the militants."

Two weeks after the incident, Handwara still seems like a ghost town. Its inhabitants are yet to overcome the shock. Some of them dig around the piles of rubble, looking for what ever may have survived the fire. The people point out that the only section of shops that have not been gutted display a board saying that it belongs to Kashmiri Hindus. "The militants fired and ran away, and our houses and people were burnt," cries Abdul Razaq. "Do they plan to kill us all and take our land? Why don't they bomb us all at once?"

On 7 October, a deputy commandant of the CRPF was shot in the head (he died later in hospital). An enraged CRPF battalion again went through their routine of setting fire to a crowded place. Nearby, at Noor Bagh in Srinagar city, a stretch of over four kilometres, has been completely razed to the ground. This incident took place on 8 October. The firing continued for over eight hours, and the blaze that followed could not be contained till the next day. A college nearby provides temporary shelter to the homeless.

Calcutta October 28, 1990.

Kashmir: Massacre Turns Heaven to Hell

William Dalrymple

"Kashmir" reads the tacky tourist poster in the paramilitary police headquarters: "A silence, mountain moods--a journey into faith." The blurb reads ironically true. Today the silence is that of the curfew, the mountain moods are anger and frustration, faith the iron grip of Islamic fundamentalism.

In the last few days' all hell has broken loose in India's mountain paradise. News of massacres is beginning to leak out, Indian troops are arriving in their thousands and all journalists are being kept under house arrest in their hotels. A crackdown of unparalleled severity is underway.

You know, it is serious as soon as you arrive at the airport off the near empty plane. The usually bustling arrival hall is deserted but for droves of security men. The runway crawls with commandos and the car park is packed with troopcarriers, military jeeps and ambulances. It is like flying into an army base.

As you drive into Srinagar the only signs of life are the dogs rooting around in the empty streets and the soldiers manning the roadblocks. Para-military police are spaced out at 10-yard intervals along the roads.

Otherwise, everything is closed up behind Hansel and Gretel fretwork shutters. Vultures wheel overhead. Black flags of mourning hang limp from the telegraph poles. On every available inch of wall is scribbled the same unambiguous message: "INDIAN PIGS GO HOME."

The Kashmiris have never had a reputation for fighting: an Indian joke maintains that the Kashmiri army always refused to get into battle without a police escort. Today things have changed.

The Kashmiris have risen en masse against what they regard as an Indian occupation in a movement that bears close comparison with the Palestinian Intifada.

Unarmed, the Kashmiris have faced the machine-guns of the third biggest army in the world and in doing so have posed the most serious challenge to the unity of the subcontinent since the Partition of India and Pakistan.

The curfew has put several restrictions on journalists and the full story of the atrocities which followed the imposition of Governor's rule are only now beginning to leak out. The worst massacre took place on Monday morning.

Just after 11 a.m. a demonstration of several thousand unarmed Kashmiris broke the curfew and headed out of the mosques of the Old City towards the town centre. They were

protesting at alleged police brutality during a search operation conducted the previous night.

When the vanguard of the demonstration had got halfway across the Gawkadal Bridge the para-military police opened fire without warning. There are no rubber bullets or water cannons in India. The para-militaries used live ammunition and automatic weapons, and they fired from both behind and in front of the crowd.

The demonstrators rushed for cover, but all those on and near the bridge were mown down.

Srinagar's three hospitals are full of stories of atrocities: 10-year-old children shot inside their homes, old men beaten up by soldiers, women abused, raped and manhandled. The problems were compounded by the fact that doctors were not issued with curfew passes and ambulance men were delayed and searched, while others were forbidden to help those, who had just been shot.

"They told us they [the injured] should die at the roadside", said one senior doctor. "The Indian soldiers here are not men they are brute animals."

Kashmir is the only state in India with a Muslim majority. At Partition it should logically have gone to Pakistan. However, the pro-Indian sympathies of the Hindu Maharaja, Hari Singh, and those of Sheikh Abdullah, the leader of the Kashmir National Conference, led to the state passing to India--on condition the Kashmiris retained a significant degree of autonomy.

Since then the Indian Government has refused to honour its constitutional commitment to the state, gradually increasing its hold on Kashmir's affairs.

In 1953, the Indian Government imprisoned Sheikh Abdullah and refused to hold a referendum, on whether the state would remain part of India. Indian administrations have toppled successive Kashmiri governments and rigged elections to install their favourites in power. Cynical elections have led to cynical, self-serving governments. Development grants have been misappropriated and squandered. Four golf courses have been built, while schools remain on the drawing-board.

Although the state has the potential to export hydro-electricity, all power is brought in over the Himalayas and supply is intermittent. No public sector industry has been sited in the valley and unemployment is rampant.

With reason, Kashmiris believe, they are not treated as full partners in the Indian Union, that they are a mere appendage, a colony.

Following the blatant rigging of the 1987 local assembly elections, many prominent opposition leaders went underground to form a series of Kashmiri, Islami, Mujahideen groups, loosely linked to the Hizbullah and Hizb-i-Islami groups in Afghanistan, Iran and the Lebanon. Soon afterwards, the bombings, strikes, assassinations and stone throwings began.

It is impossible to estimate the number of people killed in Kashmir since December 1989. Government sources give ludicrously low figures in the twenties and thirties; emotional Kashmiris speak of 400 to 500 gunned down.

All that can be said is, that people are dying every day in large numbers and the three hospitals are full to bursting with hundreds of people suffering from gun-shot injuries.

The Indian press contributes to the confusion by grossly misrepresenting, what is happening in Kashmir. The Indian people are being told that the trouble is the cause of a few "Paskistan trained militants" and no Indian newspaper has yet had the courage to admit, what is obvious to anyone who spends a minute in Srinagar--the Kashmiris have risen in a popular uprising against Indian rule.

There have even been attempts to gag the foreign press. Journalists' curfew passes have been withdrawn and they have been placed under house arrest in their hotels. Guards were posted outside to stop them leaving and a photographer was beaten up.

Telephone and telex lines from the hotels have been cut. This correspondent only managed to get out of Kashmir with difficulty, and the photographer had all his film stock seized at gunpoint by security men.

Since the imposition of the curfew, the military crackdown has been ameliorated by new initiatives announced by Governor Jagmohan. "Schools are to be built, corruption is to be punished, and new employment made available in the armed force".

However, Kashmiris are unanimous that it is too late for such cosmetic measures. Those who had second thoughts about remaining with India have changed their minds after the massacres last week.

"Development was never a consideration," said Mohammed Abdullah, a milkman in the Old City. "We were slaves and now we want our independence. The Indian dogs must go back home."

Sunday Times, London, January 1990.

The Secret Massacre of Srinagar

Tony Allen Mills

An eye witness talked about the point blank firing on a crowd by Central Reserve Police Force (CRPF). '...Shots, shots and shots. People were falling.....I also fell down. The CRPF took control of the area. There were a lot of dead and injured. But I was safe, no bullet. I was still alive, and that fellow, an officer, came with a Bren gun, a light machine-gun. He aimed at me and started firing.....I was fortunate (he leaned back), my back was just touched. six bullets, kat-kat-kat-kat-kat-kat. My head was safe, I was conscious also. I saw the bridge was completely full of dead bodies.'

The eye witness also saw policemen moving among the bodies, firing further shots at the injured. "If they saw movement, a leg or a hand or a head, they would fire again and again. They were saying: So, you want Pakistan, you want independence (and they would shoot the people and say) have your independence. And I saw one boy under a stall.....and that fellow came and fired there at the boy."

And that boy had not thrown a single stone! And that was the last week of January.

Independent, London, January 28, 1990.

The Fires of Kashmir

Edward W Desmond

Like a madfury, the will to protest--at any cost--swept through the wintry Kashmir Valley. Thousands of Kashmiri Muslims, infuriated by police searches and the detention of 400 people suspected of terrorism, poured into the streets of Srinagar last week to defy a curfew and press their demand for a break with India. "Brave Kashmiris," came calls from loudspeakers in mosque minarets, "the time has come to lay down your lives. Come out and face the occupation forces as true soldiers of Islam."

For the next two days, thousands surged through the streets and alleys of the state capital, chanting "Indian dogs, go home," and similarly incendiary slogans. They rained stones on para-military policemen and soldiers already jittery because of repeated hit-and-run attacks by Kashmiri guerrillas. The security forces responded with tear gas, then with volleys of deadly rifle fire. In Gowkadal, a congested part of Srinagar, at least 23 demonstrators died under police fire; the following day ten more were killed in a similar shooting incident in Trawdal, a middle class neighborhood.

Srinagar's Institute of Medical Sciences, angry crowds led journalists and insisted to go inside the hospital to wounded and dying who were waiting for attention in and hallways. In all, counting dozens of smaller clashes in Srinagar and outlying towns, at least 133 people were killed last week, all but nine of them civilians, and hundreds wounded; the fatalities nearly doubled the total of those killed in the 18-month-old conflict, to an estimated 279. Yet as the army moved in with an overwhelming show of force, placing the city under curfew and decreeing a news blackout, rebellious Kashmiris were undaunted. "We are prepared to sacrifice our lives," said Rahti, a middle-aged woman outside the hospital, "and even the lives of our children."

Time, New York, February 5, 1990.

Army Cracks Down in Kashmir

SRINAGAR-The Indian government finally decided to crack down on the pro-independence movement in Kashmir last week, when army troops fired on militant demonstrators in two processions, killing about two dozen people.

While a government spokesman claimed "the firing was in retaliation of heavy stone pelting," eyewitnesses maintained the shootings were unprovoked as both processions were peaceful.

For about two weeks, the capital city of Srinagar and several other parts of Kashmir were under virtual siege as the Muslim population rose in mass protest against what it called Indian dominance.

The processions were joined by hundreds of thousands of people from all over Kashmir, making a beeline to the local office of the United Nations Military Observers Group, seeking the intervention of the world body for implementation of its resolutions passed back in 1949 and calling for a plebiscite in Jammu and Kashmir.

Countless flags of the Jammu & Kashmir Liberation Front and other pro-independence groups have been fluttering all across Kashmir. Different sections of the population, including traders, transporters, students, doctors and women, joined the processions in support of their demand.

Even government employees have recently ignored repeated warnings against taking part in these demonstrations, and most of them held processions and submitted memorandums to U N. Observers that supported the ongoing movement in open defiance of service rules.

According to one U N. Observer, more than two million Kashmiris demonstrated during this period and the number of memorandums, submitted exceeded 400.

While all this was happening, government authorities watched the deteriorating situation like mute spectators. Indian paramilitary troops were withdrawn from most parts of the city and anti-India demonstrators were allowed free movement. For more than 12 days no attempt was made by the authorities to prevent processionists from going to the U. N. office.

However, this policy came to an abrupt end on March 1 when the Indian Army opened fire on two pro-independence processions at different places in Srinagar. Though officially it was declared that "only 17 people had died in the two incidents," unofficially the figure was double this figure.

The government has ordered a high level inquiry into the circumstances leading to the firing. But the government announcement has failed to lessen tension here and some people fear another major crackdown.

They also point out that the incidents took place only a day after Governor Jagmohan returned from New Delhi, where he had rushed for consultations with the government.

Following the two incidents, an indefinite curfew was clamped in Srinagar and all major Kashmiri towns and the army was called out to assist a large number of para-military troops in ensuring curfew restrictions.

India Abroad, March 9, 1990.

Exodus From Kashmir

Edward W Desmond

In war, few things are more certain than the flight of the fearful. The conflict in the Kashmir Valley may not yet qualify as a war, but the cross fire between Indian security forces and Kashmiri militants seeking to shake off Indian rule has steadily intensified since the beginning of the year, claiming at least 328 lives. For many Kashmiris, the current level of violence is worrisome enough. Some are fleeing for safety, others in search of the means to fight back. Whatever the motivation, an exodus is underway.

Kashmiri Muslims are also fleeing the valley. Their destination is Azad Kashmir, a slice of Kashmir under Pakistan's control. So far, an estimated 5,000 Kashmiris have pushed through deep snow, steep mountain terrain and Indian army patrols to make their escape. Of these, at least 500 are villagers who fled what they describe as a reign of terror by Indian security forces.

One of the refugees is Anwar Shah, 65, a farmer from Kaitha Wali, a hamlet in Kupwara district close to the frontier; alongwith 139 others from the village, he slipped off to Azad Kashmir late last month. In Athmuqam, a village on the Neelam River in Azad Kashmir, Shah and his companions claimed last week that Indian troops had defiled their mosque, abducted three girls to an army post, forced local boys to work as porters for no pay, beat anyone who annoyed them and pressed for information on Kashmiri militants. As more and more troops arrived in the area, the villagers decided that they had to flee. "When someone is going for your throat," said Shah, "you must run." The escape had a price: an Indian patrol shot dead one straggler; several people suffered frostbite; and two women apparently lost their sanity during the ordeal. The villagers were relieved to be in Azad Kashmir. "When the snows melt," said one, "many more will follow."

Other Muslim refugees are not simple villagers but angry young men looking for arms and training in the aftermath of numerous killings by Indian security forces in Srinagar. "They are all over Muzaffarabad," says a flustered Azad Kashmir official. "We don't know what to do with them." The Azad Kashmir government last week began efforts to pull the refugees into camps near Muzaffarabad, but that may not be easy. Militant Kashmiri Muslim organizations, mainly the Jammu Kashmir Liberation Front and Jamat-i-Islami, are rounding up potential recruits and taking them to their own camps. Sheikh Rashid, an Opposition member of Pakistan's National Assembly who has close ties with the J.K.L.F., claims to be feeding and sheltering 1,310 young men. Says one youth: "We have come here for help. We want arms."

Time, New York, April 16, 1990

Critical Test For India

Mark Fineman

In the shadow of the snow-peaked Himalayas, just beside the tourist houseboats that ring Kashmir's legendary Nagin Lake, Prof. Mohammed Yusuf watched in disbelief last week as Indian soldiers beat his only son to a pulp.

"At least 200 of them fell on him and started beating him with their fists and sticks," the 70-year-old retired school principal said, his voice cracking through reluctant tears.

"I thought he was dead,. But I threw myself on him to save his head. I took two strokes on my back before they pulled me off. And then they just kept beating him, and beating him, and beating him until he passed out."

And all because of four letters hand painted on an old chinar tree just outside Yusuf's family house and his son's defiance when the soldiers ordered him to lick each letter off with his tongue.

In the two months since the state government expelled foreign journalists from Jammu and Kashmir and India's security forces launched a bloody crackdown of the Kashmiri uprising for independence, hundreds have been killed, thousands have been searched and hundreds have been jailed.

Specific numbers are impossible to obtain. Few journalists have ventured into the embattled state since it was declared off-limits to the press.

But for three days last week, a *Los Angeles Times* reporter quietly toured Kashmir's war-torn capital of Srinagar by bicycle, interviewing dozens of Kashmiris, ranging from truck drivers to doctors, and witnessing the daily "cross-firings" between Kashmiri urban guerrillas and Indian troops that, between them, have left scores of civilian bystanders dead and spread panic throughout this once idyllic Himalayan city.

What the reporter found was a once-rich region that is suffering physically and all but dying economically. Tourism, once

the source of 80 percent of all revenue, is non-existent. And everyone said they are living in fear-either of *Mukhbirs*, military informants, or of Mujahideen, freedom-fighters from any one of a half-dozen armed Kashmiri insurgent groups.

" We only have two choices now." one prominent Kashmiri businessman said, asking not to be named. Either you become *Mukhbir* or Mujahid. And, in either case, may be you die. Mujahideen know. Everyone wants independence."

The uprising, in which Kashmir's overwhelmingly Muslim population is demanding secession from Hindu-dominated India, has assumed grave international importance in recent weeks. India has accused its neighbour, Pakistan, of training and arming Kashmiri insurgents across the state's international border, and Indian Prime Minister V.P.Singh has warned his nation to prepare for its fourth war with Pakistan in 30 years.

Even if the conflict stops short of war, something most analysts hopefully predict Kashmir has become a critical test case for India's claim as the world's largest secular democracy.

Already, Indian human rights groups have harshly condemned the army's brutal crackdown, which being carried out largely by Hindu troops and presided over by the state's appointed Hindu governor Jagmohan.

Most independent analysts in New Delhi agree that much of the Kashmiris' anger and frustration is well-founded the result of decades of political manipulation and broken promises by national politicians in New Delhi, who are bound by a 1947 accord that granted the Kashmiris full autonomy in all fields except defence, communications and foreign affairs. That guarantee formed the basis of Kashmir's original decision to join India rather than Pakistan during the partition of the subcontinent.

Even several senior army officers involved in the crackdown told this reporter privately that they blame the New Delhi government for failing to defuse the unrest politically before resorting to what one army general called " terribly bitter medicine."

" The Kashmir problem was created by the failure of the political process," said Indian political analyst Rajni Kothari, who

serves on the government planning commission and signed a recent published appeal for peace between India and Pakistan.

" The movement in Kashmir is very powerful. It's a movement toward democracy and independence, and there is simply no wishing it away."

Despite the Indian military campaign to force Kashmiris to remove the pro-independence and anti-Indian graffiti from the walls, trees and lamp posts of Srinagar, the city remains covered with the written code of anger and secession.

Thousands of house-to-house searches have failed to unearth major arms caches or break the militant's inner-city underground network.

In daylight and just yards away from Indian sentries, a reporter was taken to the home of a top leader of the Jammu and Kashmir Hizbul Mujahideen, the less popular and only pro-Pakistan faction of the two major armed groups in the militant alliance. There, with an AK-47 assault rifle that was once part of a U.S. financed arms shipment to "Afghan Mujahideen rebels at his side, the leader pledged to intensify the Kashmiri rebellion later this year by using more sophisticated weapons. These, he said, would include U.S. Stinger anti-aircraft that he claimed the Kashmiris are purchasing in Pakistan.

"Until then," he added boastfully, "we will continue using just grenades and small arms " to carry out daily attacks on Indian army bunkers and convoys, which he called "a catch 'em while they're sleeping " tactic.

And, despite the presence of thousands of Indian soldiers and para-military forces in a city that has suffered longer under curfew than any other Indian city in recent memory, scores of Kashmiris openly greeted a passing reporter with phrases insulting Indians and "all we want is freedom."

From everyone interviewed at length came a personal tale of torture or deprivation.

Maulvi Mohammed Hussain Turibi the *imam* (preacher) at the Batamaloo Sahib Mosque in Srinagar's old city related how he and his son were beaten, kicked and punched by soldiers

intermittently for an entire day while being forced to walk through the neighbourhood, using their bare hands to cover wall slogans with cow manure.

"I had been preaching what the Prophet (peace be upon him) used to say," Turibi said when asked why he and his family were singled out. "I used to preach that we are slaves, that we should get liberated".

"But we are being terrorised now, and I feel that if I speak out again, I will again be taken and beaten".

At a hospital, several surgeons and physicians, all of whom asked not to be named, gathered in the chief surgeon's office and described the human toll of 15 consecutive days of round-the-clock curfew, followed by an intermittent curfew last week.

Diabetics and heart patients have died for lack of medicine, they said. Pregnant women delivered still-born babies because they couldn't reach the hospital. Children have died of acute gastroenteritis. And a continuing meningitis epidemic has claimed the lives of many others.

Conceding their support for the armed liberation movement, the doctors said they are being followed by "Indian agents," adding that their ambulance drivers have been beaten and hospital staff members have been arrested and tortured.

"Look what this government has done," one of the doctors said, "A bureaucrat is a suspect. An engineer is a suspect. A doctor is a suspect. A lawyer is a suspect. My God, a policeman is a suspect.

"If we are all suspects, then who is with them (the Indians)?"

Los Angeles Times, -vide- Nawa-i-Waqat, Lahore, May 11, 1990

Indian Crackdown in Kashmir

Steve Coll

SRINAGAR, India -- Rifle shots popped like firecrackers in the thin mountain air of this once-idyllic capital of Kashmir. A

panicked horde of civilians rushed down a dirt alley from the main road, the men slapping mules into motion, the women gathering children under their arms as they ran.

Metal storefront shutters clanged shut. As if on cue, veiled women leaned from apartments above and pulled their windows closed." Cross firing" several of those fleeing called out.

Muslim militants who favour separation from India had ambushed an Indian army patrol around the corner, prompting the soldiers to return fire at a crowd of civilians. Two young men were wounded in the legs, hospital doctors said later. There were unconfirmed reports that soldier died.

Bloody skirmishes between militant separatists and Indian soldiers now occur several times a day in Srinagar, a former tourist have gripped these days by anger, fear and violence after five months of armed rebellion, prolonged curfews and a brutal crackdown by Indian security forces.

The Indian government contends that the situation is coming under control, but the popular separatist uprising here that has led India and Pakistan to threaten a fourth war for control of Kashmir appears more intractable than ever. Interviews with scores of Kashmiris over several days- from slum dwellers to doctors and bankers-suggested that the crackdown has polarized the population, driving many previously neutral civilians to the side of the militants.

Hindu-majority India claims full sovereignty over the region, while Islamic Pakistan urges that Kashmiris be allowed to choose their own destiny in a plebiscite. Meanwhile, Kashmiri militants have taken matters into their own hands, regularly attacking Indian soldiers and assassinating government officials.

Well-armed urban guerrillas here, some of whom have apparently obtained weapons originally supplied by the United States to Afghan rebels based in Pakistan, continue to operate with virtual impunity despite the presence of about 15,000 Indian soldiers and a paramilitary troops in the Kashmir Valley. And the region's people, most of whom are Muslims, appears to be broadly sympathetic to the militants, despite severe deprivations caused by round-the-clock curfew, house-to-house searches, arbitrary detentions and beatings meted out by security forces.

The valley's several million residents have been confined to their homes for long, uninterrupted stretches-12 continuous days and nights at one point during April-while soldiers pour through slum buildings and house-boats nestled along the city's lakes and canals. The searches appear to have raised the population's temper to the boiling point.

"When they have taken the gun against the people, why not take up a gun-if we have to die tomorrow, why not today?" asked Mohammed Yusuf a 70-year-old retired school teacher.

Yusuf wept as he told how two days earlier, his son, an engineer visiting from his home in the Middle East, had been beaten by security forces after refusing to wash off anti-Indian slogans painted on a tree on the street in front of his house.

" They fell on him. They began to beat him with rifles. They hit on his head, and I fell on him and they hit me. They took him away. His whole body is injured....What has happened to us? I am an old man. I can't fight them."

In a slum quarter across town, Bashir Ahmed, a tailor, displayed deep scars on his arms, shoulders and feet, which he said were the result of beatings administered by Indian soldiers after he was detained during a house-to-house search in April. Ahmed said he was beaten with sticks and rifle butts until he passed out.

"I thought, this is the end of my life. I asked, 'just shoot me.' But they only beat me"

Indian government officials describe the reports of abuses by security forces- including alleged rapes and widespread thefts-as exaggerations concocted by propagandists for the separatist militants. Kashmiris opposed to the government agree that the valley is ripe with rumours about atrocities allegedly committed by soldiers, and that many of the rumours are unfounded.

But physical evidence of abuses by security forces-in the form of scars bruises, smashed windows and charred buildings-is widely visible in Srinagar.

Indian Forces have virtually occupied the city, which normally overflows in May with foreign and Indian tourists attracted by the colours of the springtime bloom and the spectacular views of

peaks in the Himalayan range. Sandbag bunkers with machine gun barrels protruding have been erected by the army in front of hotels and handicraft shops. The houseboats, hiking trails and lake side walks are empty.

Jammu and Kashmir governor Jagmohan, who has overseen the recent Indian crackdown, during which more than 300 people have died, said the recent curfews and searches were forced upon him by the Muslim militants. He denied that there had been excesses by Indian soldiers.

But Jagmohan, who uses only one name, said he had no plans to ease the crackdown. "Now I am saving the [Indian] union," he said. "How many people did Abraham Lincoln kill? If I have to use force, there is a moral legitimacy to it. "

Jagmohan said his approach had produced " a massive gain" for the Indian government. But the valley's economy, which depends heavily on tourism, has been virtually shut down, and many Kashmiris said they felt they no longer had anything left to lose by fighting the Indians.

A network of police informers, known as mukhbirs and developed by the Indian government here, coupled with the growing strength of the armed militants, has forced ordinary Kashmiris to take sides as they never have before. "Now there are only two choices," said a Srinagar businessmen. " You become a mukhbir or a mujahed," or Muslim holy warrior.

Doctors at a downtown Srinagar hospital said that because of a recent epidemic of meningitis in the city, a number of people had died, unable to reach medical help during the curfews. The doctors complained of acute shortages of medicines, including drugs for treating cancer.

"I'm sure Pakistan should give their highest awards to Jagmohan for pushing people to become Pakistanis," said one doctor. "There are many [Kashmiri] nationalists who have become pro-Pakistan. A doctor is a suspect, a bureaucrat is suspect, so is an engineer, a businessman. If we are all suspects [to the Indians], who is with them?"

"It is a matter of circumstances-if we are being terrorized, we must take up arms. It is permitted by the Koran," said Mullah

Mohammed Hussain, 71, who said he had been detained and beaten by Indian security forces and told that he should stop preaching in his local mosque. "We are not going to be with India. They must either leave us, or, if they don't, we will go for the holy war."

Five months ago, many Kashmiris interviewed here said they were adamantly opposed to any war between India and Pakistan for control of the region because they wished to achieve independence of their own. Now the public mood appears to have shifted.

While few of those interviewed openly longed for war, a number said that because the international community has expressed little support for Kashmiri aspirations for independence, they now believe that only a military victory by Pakistan could free the valley from Indian control.

Kashmiris have struggled to define an identity for themselves separate from India for more than 40 years, but in the Indo-Pakistan wars of 1948, 1965 and 1971, valley residents watched quietly while the rival armies clashed along the border. This time Kashmiri militants and civilians would make life difficult for the Indian forces by stepping up guerrilla attacks and sabotaging roads and communications.

" We want the problem to be solved through peaceful means," said a Srinagar teacher. But if that is not possible, we welcome war."

Washington Post, Washington, U.S.A. May 7, 1990

Sing a Song of Freedom

Edward W Desmond

For the Indian soldiers and policemen in the streets, Srinagar is enemy territory., To every major crossing, they huddle around sandbag bunkers, taking shelter against the rage around them. They never know when a young man might dash up, whip back his cloak and blast away with an AK-47 rifle, to disappear seconds later in a warren of back alleys. He may kill or wound a soldier of two, and his shots will no doubt trigger a ricocheting

overreaction. The locals call it "cross-firing": angry soldiers giving chase, shooting at anything that moves, spilling their fury and playing into the hands of the militants' efforts to spark atrocities, which in turn generate recruits for the cause.

Given the frequency of such confrontations, it is no surprise that the troops look nervous and twitch at their posts around a picturesque city fallen into gloom. They train their rifles or Sten-guns at every car approaching on empty, curfew-bound streets. They check the trunk and indulge in a bit of informal interrogation. "What time does your watch say?" It should not be half an hour behind; that might mean the person joined the rebels' call to adopt Pakistan standard time. "Will you have a drink with us?" One should not say no; that might be a sign of Islamic fundamentalism. If one does not pass the tests, the results can be violent. An orthopedic specialist in the city has seen 35 broken arms, several broken noses, more than 200 broken or bruised ribs—all said to have been inflicted by Indian security forces since January.

Among the most overpowering impressions in the Kashmir Valley these days is the unity of Muslim Kashmiris on one point: India has squandered the goodwill of most of the population. That is why they say India must go; that is why small children sing songs about *azaade* (freedom) and mosque loudspeakers blare all night in some neighbourhoods with revolutionary songs and impassioned calls like "The Kashmir we have nourished with our blood is ours." Anti-Indian sentiment has spread beyond the angry young men of the Kashmir Liberation Front and the Hizb-ul-Mujahideen to parts of society that would normally be expected to support the *status quo*. Now the local police official, the senior government servant, the well-to-do middle-class businessman all talk of rebellion.

At the few checkpoints in Srinagar manned by the local Jammu and Kashmir police force, which has been all but sidelined by paramilitary forces from other parts of India, young officers joke in a decidedly treasonous way—from India's standpoint. "Good, I see you have a bomb," says one as he looks under an empty car seat. "Why don't you go and blow up the airport?" A retired civil servant tells how soldiers forced him to lick the symbol JKLF., 'painted by some vandal, off the wall of his house and pushed him around when his tongue was too dry to continue. "I supported accession [to India]," the man says, barely coherent in recalling the

experience. "But now they are victimizing us. It is because we are Muslims, and they think we are Pakistani Muslims."

A senior Jammu & Kashmir policeman ventures to a meeting with journalists to relate how frustrated he is by the "outsiders"-a favourite Kashmiri term these days-in police ranks who accuse him of a pro-militant bias in his work if he raises questions about police abuses."They tell me I am working for the militants,"he says angrily, "When I am trying to find the truth, how would you feel? I don't want to be disloyal, but we are being pushed towards the militants."

The best recruiter for the rebels, however, is the curfew. The government has imposed one for more than three months; in April it clamped down a curfew for a solid 15 days-24 hours every day in most of the valley. It was supposed to freeze 1.5 million town-dwelling Kashmiris in place while the security forces cordoned off hot spots with armoured vehicles and heavily armed men, then conducted house-to-house, room-to-room, closet-to-closet searches. Though the soldiers were not widely accused of abuse-like incidents of rape and thievery alleged against paramilitary forces who had conducted earlier searches-they did not have a light touch. Today, if a visitor happens into a place recently combed by troops, there is an instant mob scene, with a dozen offers to see someone "beaten by the army" and complaints about the press failure to "tell the world about our cause and suffering here"

One man, a prosperous merchant in Kashmir's craft export trade, was held at gunpoint on the lawn of his home in Srinagar while soldiers entered his house, frisked his wife-an extraordinary violation of honour in India, most of all among Muslims-and grilled him on his political beliefs. An old copy of a foreign news magazine with a picture of Pakistani Prime Minister Benazir Bhutto on the cover nearly got him hauled off for interrogation, but he managed to explain it away. His neighbour was less fortunate .He was taken away because he was flying a green Islamic flag on his house; four days later, he returned, badly bruised after hours of interrogations and beating by soldiers. Says a senior local policeman:"The army was told to teach these people a lesson."

The curfew strangles life in the valley. When it is on, men simply sit in their houses on street corners or in small parks, out of

sight of the security men of the main road. They cannot go to work because of the curfew, but there is no work anyway. The US Dollar 300 million tourism industry of Kashmir, once touted as "Paradise on Earth," is dead. Government offices, shops and the few industries are shuttered under the curfew. Banks are also closed most of the time, though a few, like the State Bank of India, open when the curfew lifts, and long lines form outside under the watchful eyes of soldiers in bunkers manning machine guns.

Time, New York, May 14, 1990

The Valley of Death

The daily sound of gunfire now echoes through the Kashmir Valley and with it flows the blood of innocent people whose only desire is to exercise their God-given right to self-determination. Blood flows, scenes of despair and misery are recorded and yet no solution appears to be in sight.

The death toll since the Kashmir uprising began has become meaningless. Nameless, the dead are buried and even their corpses are fired upon by trigger-happy troops, as was the case with Moulvi Farooq's funeral. But this has failed to quench the fire of freedom burning in the hearts of all Kashmiris, young and old, male or female, progressive or fundamentalist, or whatever their label.

But the killing spree in Kashmir goes on. Human rights groups are banned from entering the valley. Kashmiri youths are rounded up, chained like animals and taken away to far away prisons in Rajasthan and Bengal. Many will never come out alive from those dark holes.

It is in the light of this that the killing of Moulvi Farooq by unidentified gunmen, widely believed to be an extra-judicial killing, takes on a more sinister turn.

It is high time that all past mistakes be rectified and Kashmiris given their basic rights of freedom; rights which the authorities cannot violate. The government should be told to

hold a referendum and accept the verdict of the people. Until it does that, blood will continue to flow in the (Valley of Death).

Editorial in *Arab News*, Jeddah, May 22, 1990

Military Crushes Kashmir Faith in Secularism

David Housego

India's democratic traditions have suffered the damage that comes from using force to cow a segment of its own people, an operation that at the same time brings the armed forces into disrepute.

Secularism, the belief that different creeds can live together and which has been the corner-stone of India's identity as a nation has been lost from sight with the departure of Hindu minority who dominated hospitals, education, banks, insurance and distribution of pharmaceuticals. Kashmiri Muslims increasingly feel that their religion itself has become an offence.

Industry has come to a halt. In what is normally the height of the tourist season-with the snow-lined ridges and intense green of the valley drawing Indians in their millions up from the suffocating heat of the plains-the hotels and houseboats are empty. the endless rows of handicraft shops remain closed.

The traumatised face of Baboo Imtiaz Ahmad, 19, a young man of almost film-star looks with a great Lock of black hair, recounts how, during interrogation by paramilitary forces, he was suspended from a rotating ceiling fan.

In a backyard in the Khawaja Bazar district of old Srinagar, he displayed four cigarette burns on his arms and legs and deep bruising on his back from being trodden on.

The painful stammer of a 50-year old villager, Ghulam Mohammed Dar, released after 28 days of interrogation, told at his village of Fatehpur, near Baramulla, how he had been hung from a tree and beaten with clubs. In the same crowded room others showed the marks of chains on their legs.

At the *Eidgah* in Srinagar the open field where Muslims celebrate the Eid Festival-on one side a rough martyrs grave has been dug for militants and others, who have recently been killed. A young man shouts in a characteristic mixture of desperation:"Every-one here is prepared to die. We have only two choices, to die or be liberated."

An old man sobs in Court lane in Srinagar. He lost his two sons in cross-fire the day before.

Among the most distraught are the doctors. At the SMHS Hospital, doctors say that most of the wounded brought in have had to be treated for head, neck and chest injuries-suggesting that the paramilitary forces have fired high.

At the Lal Ded Maternity Hospital-the largest In Kashmir Dr. Mir Nazir Ahmed, the Chief Medical Superintendent, describes the last five months as a nightmare. He says that he has had to manage with only 20 per cent of his skilled staff."Most of the staff is Hindu,"he said,"They have left, packed up and gone without even telling me."

Financial Times, London May 15, 1990

And Then He Shot Me

James Clad

Since January, day in and day out,a terrible cycle of a repression has been savaging one of South Asia's most beautiful places. New Delhi seems to hope that a measured but relentless use of force will keep the Kashmir Valley within the Indian Union. The trouble is virtually no Kashmiri Muslim any longer wishes to remain in India.

On 9th May, security forces reacted to several grenades thrown in the Lal Chowk, market area in Srinagar behind indiscriminately firing automatic weapons. Firing continue sporadically for several hours. Visits to local hospitals showed at least eight people died in the violence. Even after the authorities relaxed the curfew later in the day, inhabitants walked past

sandbagged control points with hands held high; the soldiers' rifles were trained on them.

"Even on days without curfew normality is deceptive", says a senior police officer. There is a sharp divide between outside security forces, numbering nearly 150,000 men, and the 17,000 local Jammu & Kashmir. Each day results in new block-by-block searches, often by regular army units in full battle dress.

At the hospitals, exhausted staff deal with traumatic injuries. Records at the city's largest hospital show 415 people entering since January 1, with bullet wounds.

Dr. Mir Nazir Ahmed, Superintendent of the gynaecological hospital, described the bedlam erupting in his hospital when shooting occurred nearby on 9th May and casualties started to come in, including a pedlar caught in the cross-fire: "I could see that he had started sinking. We have no surgical theater here, I sent him in an ambulance but they (the paramilitary forces) would not let the vehicle through to the main hospital." Many ambulances do have bullet holes and large dents said to be caused by rifles butts.

Physicians claim that two of their colleagues, Dr. Yasin Malik and Dr. Salim, have in recent weeks been detained and beaten. Gul Javid Mohammad, a 70-year old retired Director of Statistics and Planning is in hospital with a chest wound. Soldiers burst into his home and rushed up the stairs. He recalled: "I opened the door and thought, why is this man standing in front of me with a gun, and then he shot me."

That abuses were being committed by India's array of forces is beyond question.

Far Eastern Economic Review, Hong Kong, May 24, 1990

Kashmir is Crying

Mr. Max Madden (Bradford, West): I congratulate my hon. friend the Member for Glasgow, Pollok (Mr. Dunnachie) on introducing this important debate on Kashmir. Even at this late

hour it is good that the House can debate what is happening there. I had the opportunity of visiting Kashmir in the first week of July, and I want to report what I saw, what I was told and what I believe are a series of gross human rights violations being perpetrated by the Indian security force in Kashmir.

While in Kashmir I received a copy of local newspaper which reports, with names and photographs, the people who have been murdered in recent months in Kashmir. They include men, women and children. There is a report of a baby who was murdered while taking milk from his mother and one about the body of Mohammed Farooq, the Muslim leader of Kashmir, who was murdered earlier this year. There are pages of photographs of the type that appear all too regularly in Kashmir. There are photographs of a group of murdered men, and it is clear that they had been severely tortured before they died. It is claimed that Indian security forces often attempt to conceal the identity of a body by gouging out the eyes and brutally disfiguring the face. However, bodies are identified. There is a picture of murdered child who looks about three or four year old.

Some brave women in Kashmir regularly lead protest demonstrations and there are photographs of one such demonstration. The women are protesting about Indian security forces ransacking their homes and destroying or stealing valuable property. There are two photographs of women sitting in their homes surrounded by broken damaged property.

Those newspapers report some of what is happening in Kashmir. As my hon. friend the Member from Pollok said, the newspapers are frequently closed down and their telephone and telex lines are often cut. Local people are urged by Indian security forces not to buy or read them. I also visited one of 14 refugee camps in Azad Kashmir, where 300 families were living in tents and had no drinking water. People have to walk two to three miles from the camp to Muzaffarabad to get supplies. At dusk I was introduced to a man who showed us graphically how Indian security forces had chopped off his right foot. We were told of people who had their feet, arms or hands chopped off.

I was shown a mother and a baby boy of about one year old, both of whom had serious burn marks across the stomach. I was told that they had suffered the burns under interrogation by Indian

security forces. A boy of about 15 showed me marks on his face and neck which were caused, he said, by electrodes palced there by Indian security forces. He also showed me marks on his back which he said had been caused by these security forces running red-hot irons across his back. I understand that is a familiar torture carried out by Indian security force on Kashmiris in Kashmir.

I met a teacher who told me that he had fled Kashmir after a colleague who was walking with him was arrested by Indian security forces. He watched while the colleague was assaulted and killed by those forces and then thrown in the river. That experience terrified him and next day he and his family of nine fled Kashmir and joined the thousands of refugees in Azad Kashmir.

The Kashmiris walk across mountains. Many are ill, many are injured, many die on the way and many die soon after they arrive in Azad Kashmir. Others survive in poor conditions. I urge the governments of Pakistan and Azad Kashmir and the people of Britain to do as much as they can to rilieve the suffering and hardship of the refugees who have fled Kashmir and live in poor condition in Azad Kashmir.

On the day that I visited a refugee camp I was told that another dead body had been taken from the river that runs along the side of the camp. That was the 43rd dead body to be taken from the river since January this year.

All that I have mentioned constitutes to my mind, and to that of any fair minded person, a worrying pattern of brutal repression that is being perpetrated by Indian security forces in Kashmir. It is systematic. It is serious and it represents a pattern of serious human rights violations which is a serious indictment of the world's largest democracy-which India claims to be.

My hon. friend the Member for Pollok referred to curfew. When I was in Kashmir, the curfew was supposed to run from 7 p.m. until 8 a.m. In fact it ran from 7 p.m. on Friday night until Saturday, afternoon, when I left Kashmir. In April, there were three weeks of permanent curfew in Kashmir when the dead were not allowed to be buried, to have babies, the sick were not allowed to leave their homes to obtain treatment and no one was allowed out to buy food or get water. In those intolerable circumstances, is it any wonder that there is mounting opposition to the occupation of Kashmir by

India and mounting support of those who are engaged in armed struggle?

I have referred to the systematic house searches that take place constantly. Indeed, the day that I spent in Kashmir house searches were under way on an enormous scale. There is constant harrassment and intimidation particularly of young men, which again causes considerable resentment and hostility among all civilians in Kashmir.

Martial law was introduced on the day I arrived in Kashmir. It gives authority to constables and junior police officers to shoot on sight. In effect, it legitimises the right to shoot to kill.

We do not know how many political prisoners have been taken into detention in Kashmir in the past two years or so. The best estimates are between 10,000 and 15,000. Many of them have been moved from Kashmir to the hottest northern states of India. There are worrying reports about the conditions in which the prisoners are detained and their treatment.

I hope that the Minister will be able to go much further than he did when he replied to another debate that I initiated in March this year, which was concerned with events in the Punjab and Kashmir.

The pattern of human rights violations in both places is identical. In both cases the Indian security forces are implementing state terrorism. Yes, it is in response to individual terrorism, but we know that whenever state terrorism is implemented in response to individual terrorism there is an escalation of violence, and there is no end to the escalation unless and until political action is taken to resolve matters.

In Kashmir and in the Punjab the Indian government thinks that they can resolve such issues by military means. In my view that is impossible because in both Kashmir and the Punjab, those engaged in armed struggle have the mass, popular support of the people, who have been totally alienated by the total repression used by the Indian security forces against their aspirations.

I hope that the Minister will be able to say tonight that the Indian government have confirmed the invitation to Amnesty International so that it can visit Kashmir and the Punjab thoroughly

and independently to investigate the allegations of human rights violations in both states.

When I was in India, I was shocked to hear Rajiv Gandhi make a speech to his party's youth conference saying that, in his view, Amnesty International was a front organisation for the Central Intelligence Agency, which is prejudiced against India and in favour of Pakistan. He went further and urged his young party supporters to protest outside the Prime Minister's office against the invitation, and he said that if Amnesty International was allowed to visit India, the airport at Delhi should be occupied and he would be proud to join his party supporters in the sit-in to stop the organisation entering India or being able to investigate human rights violations in Kashmir or the Punjab. That is an amazing admission for a former Prime Minister of the world's largest democracy to make in 1990.

In the face of a mountain of allegations about human rights violations in Kashmir, we cannot remain neutral. The Minister can't dispute the scale of the human rights violations, in view of the authenticated reports of the numbers of people who have been murdered, seriously injured, tortured, detained, raped, harassed and intimidated daily by Indian security forces whose numbers we do not know- the minimum estimate is 150,000 and some estimates put it as high as 400,000 or 500,000 of every variety in Kashmir.

Therefore I urge the Minister and Her Majesty's government to take action and put pressure on the Indian government to allow people of Kashmir to hold a referendum and decide their own future and the destiny of their country. The time has come, not for gestures but for the British government to make clear their condemnation of the human rights violations in Kashmir.

I urge the British government to allow children and students from Kashmir who are in the United Kingdom to attend United Kingdom schools and colleges. At least 30 children from Kashmir are seeking Home Office permission to remain here and undertake the education that they are denied in Kashmir. Nearly all schools, colleges, banks and other public buildings in Kashmir are closed. Local administration is non-existent. There is, therefore, an overwhelming need for the British government to make a modest contribution to the future of Kashmir by ensuring that children and students from Kashmir are allowed to secure an education here.

As there is a great shortage of medical supplies in Kashmir, I also urge the Kashmiri community here to do everything that it can to raise money to buy medical supplies. May I ask the British government to make a request to the Indian government that they should allow those supplies to enter Kashmir and that they should instruct Air India to carry them. In recent months there have been reports that Air India has refused to carry medical supplies.

It is also important that the international media, including the British media, should be able to report what is happening in Kashmir. It is vital that British Members of Parliament and politicians from the parliaments of other countries should visit Kashmir. The India High Commissioner in London has assured that India has nothing to hide or conceal in Kashmir. However, when I talk to journalists from the newspaper and broadcasting media they tell me that visas are not made available to them by the Indian High Commission and that they are unable to visit Kashmir. I have been told hon. Members that applications for visas to visit Kashmir have not been granted, even though their applications were made some time ago.

Kashmir is a beautiful country-the most beautiful that I have ever visited. It is the Switzerland of Asia. It has mineral resources, a population of 10 million people and economic viability. Above all, I believe that the people of Kashmir are entitled to nationhood that they hold dear. It is also important to have a buffer, an independent state between India and Pakistan, which could add greatly to the stability and long-term peace of that important region.

I hope that the minister's reply tonight will give some hope to the people of Kashmir that, in the near future, they will have the opportunity for which they are now paying dearly and which so many other people round the world have-the right to be able to decide freely and fairly their future, and that of their lovely country.

British House of Commons Official Report Parliamentary
Debates. July 24, 1990.

Amnesty International: Appeals for Urgent Action

I-Appeal, Dated 30 January, 1990

According to reports in the international press, Indian Security Forces have killed at least 50 civilians during demonstrations in Jammu & Kashmir since last Sunday, 21 January, 1990. Other reports say several hundred have been killed. Many of the victims were apparently shot in the head or body by members of the Central Reserve Police Force (CRPF) or the army, without the security forces apparently first attempting to use other nonlethal methods of crowd control. Although the demonstrations were accompanied by acts of violence, the demonstrators are said to have been unarmed. According to Indian press reports, thousands of demonstrators who had come from villages, marched to Srinagar centre on Sunday and, when reaching Hawal, were shot from behind by the CRPF. One of the victims is said to be a nine-year old boy. The security forces are also alleged to have deliberately shot dead wounded demonstrators lying on the street.

A 38 year old engineer, who was himself a survivor of shooting of unarmed demonstrators defying curfew in Srinagar on 21 January 1990, claims that members of the CRPF, after shooting the demonstrators, searched for survivors lying in the street and killed them. He says, that he himself, left for dead, was thrown into a truck together with the bodies of an unspecified number of victims of the shooting and survived with four or five others. He later received hospital treatment.....

Recommended Action:

Expressing Amnesty International's concerns about reported arbitrary killing in Jammu & Kashmir.

Urging the authorities to order an investigation into allegations that unarmed demonstrators, including wounded people lying on the street, were shot dead on Sunday, 21 January, by members of the Central Reserve Police Force (CRPF);

Urging that instructions to be issued to all security forces in charge of law and order not to use lethal force except as a last resort and when no alternative methods of crowd control are available;

Appealing that all those arrested be humanely treated and that those against whom there is no criminal acts be released.....

II-Appeal, Dated 2 March, 1990

The international press reported that Indian security forces had killed at least 50 civilians during demonstrations in Jammu and Kashmir between 21 and 30 January. According to reports received, Indian security forces have killed a further 29 and possibly more people during demonstrations in Tengpora and Zakura in and near Srinagar, Kashmir, on 1 March. Apparently, troops fired into the crowd with automatic weapons without warning after demonstrators shouted slogans for the independence of Kashmir and some of them threw stones at the soldiers....

Recommended Action

Expressing Amnesty International's concern about renewed reports of arbitrary killing in Jammu & Kashmir, particularly the Tengpora and Zakura in and near Srinagar and urging an official investigation into these killing;

....stressing that even in times of public emergency it is the responsibility of the government to protect the right to life of its citizens; urging once more that, if not done so already, immediate and strict instructions be issued to all troops in charge of crowd control not to use lethal force unless faced with a life threatening situation, and to shoot only after appropriate warnings have been given.

III-Appeal, Dated 23 May, 1990

On 21 May, dozens of unarmed civilians were killed near the Islamia College in Srinagar when the Central Reserve Police Force (CRPF) allegedly opened fire indiscriminately on mourners accompanying the body of Maulavi Mohammad Farooq, the head priest of Srinagar who had been shot earlier that day by three unidentified gunman.

The exact number of people killed is not known. Official reports say 20 people died on the spot and 27 later died of gunshot wounds in hospital. However, some unofficial reports put the total number of people killed as high as 177. During a debate in Parliament, on 22 May, government ministers reportedly said that militants mingling in the crowd of mourners had opened fire first on the CRPF and that civilians had been killed in the "crossfire". Witnesses and journalists did not support this interpretation and said the shootings on unarmed people were unprovoked and indiscriminate. Although several members of the CRPF are reportedly now receiving treatment for injuries, to Amnesty International's knowledge none were killed during the incident, as might have been expected in an open exchange of fire with militants.

Recommended Action

Expressing concern about reports of arbitrary killings of dozens of unarmed civilians accompanying the body of Maulvi Mohammad Farooq in Srinagar on 21 May; urging the authorities to establish an immediate, independent investigation into these and previous reports of possible extrajudicial executions.

Muslim India, New Delhi August 1990.

Life At Gunpoint

Just before four p.m. traffic in the center of Srinagar city comes to a stand still for about twenty minutes to let a few buses pass.

The buses take Hindu government employees from their sandbagged offices to their safe dormitories separated from Muslim areas by troops in battle gear.

In the stalled traffic, a visitor has time to take stock of what has happened in less than a year to the valley where, Jawaharlal Nehru wrote, "loveliness dwells and enchantment steals over the senses".

The gingerbread-trimmed house boats on Dal Lake lie silent, with no tourists to rent them. The shops of Delegate in Srinagar that remain open are also empty except for a few salespeople chatting to each other to pass the time. Banks and schools are closed in support of a govt.-employees strike.

Kashmiris, seeking independence, that many now acknowledge, cannot be won by force of arms, have sunk into a sullen stand-off with New Delhi.

Daily life is lived within almost constant view of armed men. Indian paramilitary troops stand guard on nearly every street corner, rifles pointed chest-high at passerby venturing out to shop or visit friends.

Behind the walls edging narrow lanes, armed freedom fighters move with ease, shielded by a largely sympathetic population. Each side accuses the other of terrorising the civilians.

India, often portraying this as an Islamic-rebellion description Kashmiris angrily reject has yet to allow any international human right groups to come here. American Congress delegations are told that the valley is too dangerous to visit.

"Where", a lawyer asked, "is the world's respect for United Nations resolutions that promised Kashmiris a plebiscite more than 40 years ago? Only George Bush can help us now" he said.

At his home in a quiet residential neighbourhood patrolled by troops in combat uniforms, the former Chief Justice of the Jammu & Kashmir High Court said, "Half a generation had been destroyed by Indian military swoops."

"Thousands of young people have been detained, hundreds of all ages killed and whole neighbourhoods and villages torched by troops", he said.

At his office on a hill above Srinagar, the State Governor, Girish Saxena said, "believe that more than 400 Kashmiris have been killed as suspected informers".

Mr.Saxena, former head of the Research and Analysis Wing (RAW), India's equivalent of the U.S.Central Intelligence Agency, runs the state with sweeping powers.Jammu & Kashmir has been declared a "disturbed area."

He acknowledges that the powers Indian troops possess are some times misused, but adds that they operate under severe provocation.

"We have taken very serious notice of these charges," Mr.Saxena said. "We have suspended people and are prosecuting them. He said, "Thirty cases are being investigated, including manslaughter, arson and the molestation of women".

"Where we find innocent people have suffered, we give them compensation,"he said.

In an interview with two freedom fighters at a "safe house" in the city, one of them acknowledged that the arrests had forced some "changes in organisation."But the freedom fighters, armed with Chinese pistols said, they had not lost public support.

New York Times -- vide -- Nation, Lahore, October 9,1990.

The Fires of Srinagar

Srinagar, the summer capital of the State of Jammu and Kashmir, has been the scene of daily sniping and sporadic gunfights ever since a Kashmiri secession effort exploded early this year. In recent weeks, Kashmiri guerrillas have sharply increased their attacks, and last week they ruined parts of the city into a battleground. Fighters with automatic weapons and rocket-propelled grenades attacked outpost and patrols of the Indian Paramilitary Forces in sections of the old city, a maze of narrow alleys, open sewers and dilapidated wooden buildings.

The fighting continued for six hours and soon fires began to spread. Most residents of the Noorbagh, Bulbul Lanker,Kawdara and Reshippeer areas fled, but some witnesses who stayed behind claimed that security forces had torched the buildings. The authorities denied the charge, though troopers had previously been implicated in a series of arson cases in other parts of Kashmir Valley. Less than 36 hours after the fighting erupted, 600 houses and shops had been gutted, and 900 families were left homeless. The death toll in the clashes, which sputtered on for four days included

13 security troopers, two guerrillas and 16 civilians, though government sources maintained that seven of the civilians were in fact militants.

The latest series of attacks, which guerrilla sources said, was a coordinated effort by three main groups including the Jammu Kashmir Liberation Front, Hizbullah and the Al-Umar Mujahedeen, seemed to mark an effort by the insurgents to recapture world attention. In a statement claiming a victory, JKLF Chief Javed Ahmed Mir declared, "We shall continue the attacks and we shall never allow the Indians to sleep." He also criticized Pakistan and the Arab world for their "Criminal silence" over the uprising in Kashmir.

In response, security forces are turning up the pressure in the valley. Embattled areas of Srinagar have been assigned to the army, which has built fortifications at intersections and deployed armoured vehicles. The security forces also seem to be engaged in an unofficial campaign of making Kashmiris pay a high price for the insurrection by setting fire to areas where guerrilla attacks have taken place. In recent weeks six villages have been largely razed by fire as has the town of Handwara, where 25 civilians were either shot or burned to death last week and 361 houses and shops were torched by a unit of the Border Security Force after it lost one of its members in an ambush. Kashmir Governor Girish Saxena claims that most fires have started accidentally during skirmishes, but he has launched an investigation into some of them including the one at Handwara.

Time New York, October 22, 1990.

Kashmir: A Subtle Shift

Harinder Baweja

There was curfew in May, there is curfew now. There were killings in May, there are killings now. Police vehicles were ambushed in May, they continue to be. Innocents fell prey to militants and security forces then, they do so still.

Yet, there is a change in Kashmir, a subtle, almost indiscernible change, that is often attributed to the different styles of

the two governors, who have ruled the state this year-Jagmohan, who reigned for five months till end-May and Girish Saxena, who has completed almost four months in office. And perhaps learning from Jagmohan's mistakes, Saxena has refrained from imposing curfew on Fridays, a day when people gather at Sringar's Jama Masjid or Hazrat-Bal shrine for prayers and then take out a procession to the UN office. As in the past, such processions are still stopped before they reach the UN office, but instead of seeking a confrontation as earlier, the administration now drives down UN representatives to meet the processionists and take their memorandum.

So, does governor Saxena have a soft touch where Jagmohan adopted a hard line? Look again and compare the death tolls of April and July. Twenty innocents and 34 militants were killed in April, while 58 innocents and 106 terrorists died in July. The truth is that since Saxena took over the death toll in Valley has shot up.

Yet, if despite the hard facts, the average Kashmiri considers Jagmohan the bigger villain, it is largely because of his personal style and the situation when he took over. For one, he arrived in the Valley when the pro-Azadi [Liberation Lovers] movement was at its peak. Curfew or no curfew, crowds of thousands daily poured into the streets and shouted anti-India slogans. The people truly believed that Azadi was round the corner. The local police sympathised with the secessionists. The Pandits were fleeing en masse. The administration had collapsed and it was the militants' writ that ran in the Valley. Besides, it was India's first real effort to deal with urban guerrilla warfare as against the more rural-based militancy of Punjab and the North-east. In that context, Jagmohan was something of a guinea-pig.

Saxena too inherited a bloody mantle, a Valley up in arms against Moulvi Farooq's killing and the subsequent firing on his funeral procession. But there was a crucial difference. If during Jagmohan's reign the militants were testing India's strength, by the time Saxena came along, they knew there would be no letting down on the toughness. The increasing number of arrests on the border. Though separation from India is still the aim of all the militant groups, the pro-azadi storm that swept the state during Jagmohan's time, today appears to be petering out into a campaign against excesses of the security forces.

If the situation is different, so are the styles. And the manner in which Jagmohan went about his task only compounded his problems. He was one man playing three roles: the policeman, the administrator and the publicity officer. The upshot was that he had to take the flak for everything. To the average Kashmiri, he became the hated symbol of the system they believed was perpetrating atrocities: it was as if Jagmohan himself was firing the bullets, bursting tear-gas shells and engaging the militants in counter action: as if he was personally supervising the searches and seizures. As one of Jagmohan's advisers puts it: "It was no fault of his, he lost out because of his belligerent style, for with him it was a one man show."

In the end, he paid the price for this larger than life image. Though Jagmohan heard about the firing on Moulvi Farooq's funeral procession--which claimed 57 lives hours after the incident, it was he who got the flak, and the sack. And as cries of "Moulvi ka *hatyuara kaun!*, Jagmohan," rent the air, he left the Valley dubbed a killer

Saxena, in contrast, keeps a low profile and works behind the scenes. And he delegates work which means he does not have to shoulder all the responsibility. Compare some of his statements with that of his predecessor: "As long as incidents keep taking place we can't describe the situation as satisfactory," or "There are hopeful signs but it will take quite some time," are typical Saxena statements. And they are in stark contrast to Jagmohan's declarations like "I retrieved Kashmir from Pakistan," and "I saved Kashmir from a Tiananmen Square situation."

Yet the violence in the Valley continues unabated--last fortnight in the span of a week the militants made an attempt on the lives of four leading police officers, killing five of their guards. At the same time the death toll--of both militants, security forces and civilians--continues to mount.

But facts count for little when the public perception differs. And if in the public eye Jagmohan was an AK-47 assault rifle--swift, rapid fire and lethal--then Saxena is a sniper rifle--slow, cautious and precise.

India Today, September 30, 1990.

MP Urges Change of Stance on Kashmir

Phil Murphy

A YORKSHIRE MP has returned from a week-long trip to the Kashmir with a fresh call to the British government to change its stance on the conflict in the territory and to intervene to end bloodshed and torture.

India is resisting demands that its part of Kashmir should become independent or join Pakistan.

Mr. Max Madden (Lab Bradford West) said his experiences convinced him that there was an attempt by Indian security forces to eradicate virtually all male Kashmiris between the ages of 10 and 35.

He had visited a refugee camp where tents housed 300 families. There, one man told of how he had his right foot chopped off by the security forces, one woman and her baby bore burn marks on their stomachs allegedly inflicted by security forces and another man showed scars he claimed came from electrodes attached to his face and neck.

Since the beginning of January, 43 bodies had been found in one river, some of the corpses with their faces disfigured by torture in attempts to prevent identification, Mr Madden was told.

At a Press conference the MP held up copies of a Kashmir broadsheet newspaper. Nearly two full pages were filled with the photographs of Kashmiris believed to have been murdered by security forces. They included one two-year old.

Mr. Madden was told that rape and the looting of houses by Indian security forces were commonplace.

Now, he is to press again for Britain to use its efforts to persuade India and Pakistan to resolve their dispute and allow the Kashmiris to determine their own future for themselves.

He believes a plebiscite of the nearly 12 million population would back the creation of an independent state of Kashmir.

Earlier this year the Prime Minister responded to a letter from Mr. Madden stating that the British position was one of neutrality backed by calls for restraint from Indian security forces and end to violence by all elements in Kashmir.

"I think in the face of mounting evidence of systematic human rights abuse it is a position the British government will not be able to maintain," said Mr. Madden.

He also wants India to confirm its invitation to Amnesty International to enter Kashmir and investigate allegations of human right violations. He had tabled a Commons motion to that effect.

Mr. Gary Waller, the Conservative MP for Keighley, is among those who have signed the motion. Another 35 have also signed the motion.

Mr. Waller said he backed Mr. Madden's call for an end to human rights abuses but he said he believed it was difficult for Britain to take a leading role in an issue which was very much related to the interests of two independent countries.

Mr. Waller has also expressed alarm at the decision to give the Indian army sweeping new powers over large areas of Kashmir.

Mr. Madden said the new powers meant martial law across the whole of the Kashmir Valley with police officers as junior as constable given the right to shoot on sight.

Reproduced from "*Al-safa*", Srinagar, October 1, 1990

Jammu and Kashmir

Bar Association Resolution

Whereas having considered the precarious and unprecedented situation confronting the Kashmiri Nation and being conscious of the onerous responsibility of the Legal profession towards the Society-The Jammu & Kashmir Bar Association, comprising all the Bar Association of the Kashmir Province, has been constituted.

Having assembled at Srinagar on this 31st day of January, 1990, the Association has unanimously resolved as under:-

The Association condemns the recent intensification in repression and oppression of the people and repudiates all forms of violence-Death, Detention, Torture, use of military force and illegal search-perpetrated upon Kashmiris by Indian military and security forces as a flagrant violation of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and other like Conventions.

The Association condemns the unending massacre and genocide of the people including the death of about six hundred innocent Kashmiris and injury to a large number of them as a result of unprovoked and unauthorized firing by the Indian military and security forces.

The Association condemns all the measures aimed at curtailing the freedom of press and right to information of the people and further condemns the malignity of misreport and suppress facts made by official media and the biased Indian press about Kashmir affairs.

The Association calls upon the Indian government to desist from the use of brute force and make a fervent appeal on United Nations and all the nations of the world to take effective measures for procurement of right of self-determination of the people of Jammu & Kashmir and for preventing the incursion of their basic rights under the ruthless and despotic rule of India.

To Human Rights Organisations

I am writing on behalf of the Council for Human Rights in Kashmir to draw your attention to the appalling crimes against the life, freedom and dignity of the people of Kashmir. The Council is a non-political, secular organization which seeks to monitor the human rights situation in Kashmir and obtain the help of people of conscience and concern toward its amelioration. Many of its members have strong family connections in Kashmir.

As representatives of the international news media have been expelled from Kashmir and their re-entry banned, press coverage of occurrences in Kashmir is extremely meagre in view of

its human dimension and as compared to lesser situations elsewhere. Some of the facts are:

--- Since January 20, the number of those shot dead by the Indian army runs into hundreds; a conservative estimate would put it at nearly 500;

--- Thousands lie injured with bullet wounds; these include women and children;

--- Peaceful demonstration, at times of a million people or more, virtually the entire population of a city demanding the right of self-determination and an independent Kashmir, have been indiscriminately sprayed with fire from automatic weapons;

--- Many cases of rape have been reported; in one instance, the victim was a woman just after her wedding ceremony;

--- Those who lie wounded in hospitals are dying from lack of medicines; medical supplies are being withheld from India;

--- Curfews are being imposed on a daily basis and shoot-at-sight orders are carried out ruthlessly; as a result, people cannot provide themselves with the necessities of daily life; the scale of the consequent hunger and hardship is easily imaginable.

This situation has reached a level of intensity because the people of Kashmir can no longer tolerate foreign occupation by force. They were given a solemn pledge by the United Nations that they would be enabled to exercise their choice as to what sovereignty they should live under. India is a direct party to this commitment. For forty years, it has remained unfulfilled.

The aim of the struggle in Kashmir is, therefore, entirely of a secular character. The fact that an overwhelming majority of the people are Muslims does not mean that, as India would wish the world to believe, they are motivated by any kind of fundamentalism. They take pride in their history and traditions of amity and tolerance between the different religious communities. Nor is the current phase of their movement a result of terrorism—a million unarmed demonstrators, including women and children, can hardly be terrorists.

We seek your help in:

- (a) urging the Government of India to stop violent repression and permit the sending of medical and emergency relief to Kashmir;
- (b) urging the government of India to allow foreign reporters to visit Kashmir. Impressing upon the government that the recent restrictions placed on the press and the expulsion of foreign reporters is contrary to internationally recognized standards of press freedom, including Article 19 of the Universal Declaration of Journalists of the United Nations which guarantees the right "to seek, receive and impart information and ideas through any media regardless of frontiers."
- (c) Impressing upon the United States government the need to use their best influence bilaterally with India and multilaterally at the United Nations in order to redress the present situation;
- (d) Impressing upon the Indian Government to start a dialogue with the Kashmiri people and resolve this issue peacefully, taking into consideration the wishes of the people of Kashmir.

M. Farooq Kathwari, *Coordinating Chairman*, Council for
Human Rights in Kashmir New York March 21, 1990

An Appeal to The Citizens of The World

On 21st of May, 1990, with the massacre at Islamia College Srinagar, the sky (proverbial limit to everything) has fallen apart and constrained us to break our silence.

Faith and patience were what the peace loving people of Kashmir survived on for more than four decades. Then suddenly, even these were throttled as the new year set in-for along with came an unforeseen darkness in form of rampant destruction of life and property by none other than the official guardians themselves.

Forces, trained to fight enemies, were let loose upon innocent unsuspecting people of Kashmir Valley on the pretext of fighting terrorism. The helpless people have since then just watched the "Signals" of hard methods, to solve the so-called Kashmir problem, turning into wave of open repression- unknown even in the acknowledged areas of human sufferance like Israel and South Africa.

While around the globe the people are getting themselves rid of their shackles of lawlessness and atrocities of various governing systems, we have silently watched Kashmir being plunged deeper into the whirlpool of organised and legalised savagery where medieval standards of governance look Utopian liberation of humankind.

Scared and unsure we endured suffering in silence with hope that better sense would prevail and the clouds of distrust, contempt and repression which were causing untold agony to the people of Kashmir and some areas of Jammu and Ladakh would disappear, but that was not to be.

The massacre at Islamia College Srinagar on 21st of May 1990 is only the goriest form of administrative action pointing certainly to a design of genocidal proportions already being implemented in this unfortunate land. The mere fact that the toll of the unprovoked firing on an unarmed mourning procession of hundreds is dreadful enough but not all. It must have been perhaps a record that two sets of pallbearers were gunned down. Even the dead body was not spared. It was not bullets but something worse than venom being poured out of those guns that has shattered hundreds of families, brought shame to Indian democracy and left a scar on the psyche of Kashmir which would never be removed.

The Islamia College instance is the umpteenth such incident in the past five months. Gawkadal, Zakoora, Tengpora, Hawal, Lalchowk, Handwara, Baderwah, Bandipura and Anantnag are no longer names but knells that remained one of the firing exercises by the paramilitary forces that have taken a collective toll of many hundred people.

To add insult to injury, the innocent victims of random and indiscriminate firings have invariably been accorded the epithet of terrorists. No matter, none of them was wielding a gun and also of

very little consequence the fact that they included pregnant ladies, children, the old and infirm too.

The indignities inflicted in the name of searches are an anathema to the rights of the people of the civilised world and antithesis of the declared principles enshrined in the India constitution itself. Armed and paramilitary forces are employed for the purpose without any legal sanction. State police has been reduced to the status of untouchables simply because this force happens to be from the majority community. The atrocious manner in which these searches are conducted is a bolt on the name of democracy and the institutions involved in them. No respect is shown to age, status or human feelings. Etiquette and regard for privacy are a far cry. Channapora, Batmaloo and host of other areas including the far flung border villages will always remain a vexation to the soul of India.

The de-humanising process touched its lowest when a bride and her chambermaid were pulled from a bus by the paramilitary forces and raped. The bridegroom was all but killed with bullets pumped into him. One was shot dead and many others in the marriage party were injured. This happened in Badasgam, Anantnag while a groom was bringing home his 18 year old bride. Does any one have shame to own the responsibility for ramping the sweetest thoughts and purest bodies of a teen aged couple on their nuptial night?

This is not a chronological record of instances but an outrage at the unbearable behaviour of the people manipulating our existence and to top it the press censor has projected an almost "Tailor-made for Center" picture to the Indian state. A curtain has been drawn upon the many honest reports of independent and semi autonomous initiatives on Kashmir. And unhindered by world reaction the "Operation-Save Kashmir, Kill Kashmiri" goes on.

No one is aware of the exact number of people behind bars outside the state. All of them are held without trial. Not even martial law is applied to them by the forces that have trapped young able bodied men like starry animals. Their journey to jails is incomplete without a stop at the interrogation centres which in effect are torture cells. Interrogation here has assumed a new and

filthy meaning. No one is spared the physical and mental agony-be he guilty or not, aged or young, a businessman or a pauper.

Hundreds of civil servants have lost their jobs without undergoing the formality of even an enquiry. Many of them are imprisoned. Doctors have been pushed into a strike at a time when they are needed the most by the society. Their persecution continues while they are deliberately prevented from treating the sick and injured.

Existing in the longest curfew bound area and having survived till date, we condemn all these atrocities being inflicted on defenceless and innocent Kashmiri Muslims and hope that the whole world joins us to condemn the same in strongest possible terms. We also appeal to the world media to bring to light the ground realities existing in the Valley of Kashmir by deputing spot verification teams. We also appeal the peace loving world to persuade Indian government to respect the genuine aspirations of the people of Kashmir, put an end to the repressive measures and adopt a pragmatic approach towards this serious problem.

First Signed by 137 employees of the Jammu & Kashmir State. May 27, 1990.

News Blockade in Kashmir

Asha Khosa

In what can be reckoned as the worst hour of crisis in its recent history, Kashmir Valley is facing an unprecedented "information blockade". The administration, through its government controlled media, manages a "desirable" coverage of the Kashmir situation.

The results are apparent. The Kashmir militants are having a field day. Word of mouth is the most authentic source of information for an average Kashmiri today and the pro-Pakistani secessionists, despite a ban on eight such organisations, are keeping alive their propaganda through this and the cyclostyled literature pasted on city's walls each night during curfew hours.

The local Doordarshan and Radio station have closed down their respective establishment in Srinagar and have moved 300 km away to Jammu in March after the gruesome murder of the Srinagar Doordarshan director Lassa Koul by militants in February. Srinagar Doordarshan is now relaying shoddy, worn out programmes through amateur announcers from the ITDC hotel in Jammu. Srinagar radio is finding it difficult even to get Urdu news readers, for all the professionals have quit their jobs following threats from the militants. The entire valley had been going without national newspapers for the past three months. Last week the administration sealed four local presses belonging to influential Urdu dailies and registered cases against 11 establishments with the decision to start an Urdu daily of its own. The action against the press coincided with the ban on eight secessionist organisations including the Jammu and Kashmir Liberation Front.

"Imagine how humiliating it was to be clubbed with the secessionists", said a journalist representing a foreign news agency. The next day all the 30 newspapers took the decision to suspend their publications indefinitely. In protest a number of journalists procured anticipatory bails from court as a precautionary measure. Their fears materialised when two local photo-journalists were arrested on April 29, from Srinagar. Within days the valley was completely marooned from the mainland.

The local journalists belonging to about 30 dailies and a number of periodicals maintain that their reporting was totally professional. They allege that the gagging of the press had come at the time when the local press highlighted the police atrocities during combing operations. Says Ghulam Nabi Khayal, a veteran journalist and a Sahitya Akademi award winner who represents a number of papers and foreign agencies: "When the national press chose to report on Kashmir on the basis of handouts issued from the Faj Bhavan in Jammu, the local journalists reported the atrocities being committed on Kashmiris and within days came the curbs on the press. You can't call this a coincidence."

"Holding the press solely responsible for the flare up in terrorism in Kashmir is certainly escapism," says a young journalist who has been rendered jobless following the closure of his newspaper. "The local press too works under threat" a local editor added.

Today the government media works from Jammu from its camp office manned by nearly 100 employees and no handouts are issued in Srinagar. The local journalists are totally ignored, obvious from the foot that the Home Minister Mufti Mohammad Sayeed brought a chartered planeload of journalists from Delhi when he addressed a press conference in Srinagar giving the impression that all was well. "The same conference could have been held in Delhi. Why spend all this money simply to get a dateline," a journalist said.

As a result, the people of Kashmir today depend on the Voice of America, BBC and transmissions from Pakistan Occupied Kashmir to get "authentic information" about what is happening in the state. In front some allege that the government is jamming the frequencies of the transmission from POK and Pakistan TV. Said one journalist, " The government seems to be making the same mistake it made in Punjab by blocking information. By this they will be doing more harm than good. The curbs seem to have further added to the alienation of the Kashmiris from the Indian mainstream,"

India Week, Delhi May 4, 1990.

Black Friday at Paazipora

Survivors' tell-tale Account of the Mayhem

Ghulam Nabi Khayal

Paazipora is a small and isolated village about 15 km from the border town of Kupwara, about 100 km North-west of Srinagar. On August 10, 1990, some unidentified armed militants attacked an army patrol in Dedikot village, 2 km away from Paazipora. The official sources said in the evening that in this attack, 12 militants were killed and 4 soldiers injured. With the death toll going up to 26 on August 12, the Radio Kashmir, Srinagar, which broadcasts its all news bulletins from the studios of all-India in New Delhi, quoted an official source repeating that militants were killed in Paazipora. This time, the number of those "militants" killed in all was given out to 24.

Mr. Ghulam Nabi Kahyal, a senior Journalist from Kashmir, who is also a national award winning poet and writer,

visited Paazipora on Sunday, August 12, for an on-the-spot investigation and reporting.

Mr. Kahyal, who represents the Voice of America, the United Press International news agency, Washington Post, and two leading Pakistani dailies, Nawa-i-Waqt and the Nation, reports about the incident:

The highly decomposed body of 60-year old Abdul Subhan Bhatt lay there under the shade of a walnut tree . His newly prepared grave the 25th in the last of seven rows, was now ready to conceal his stinking body. Bhatt had been shot in his right armpit and bruises and cuts were seen on his both arms indicating that he had been tortured before death.

The graves with no name-plates or gravestones were of those old and young Kashmiris who were killed in a massacre by the Indian army-men in Paazzipora village, about 115 km north-west of Srinagar on the morning of Friday, August 10, 1990.

According to eye witnesses, some militants had opened fire on an army patrol or a convoy on that day around 10.30 A.M. The incident took place in Didikot village, about 2 Km from Paazipora. This correspondent also saw windowpanes of the army vehicles shattered at two places in Didikot village which he had to pass through before reaching Paazipora. Since no one was seen present in the village, one could not have an account of what actually happened in Dedikot.

"We don't know what happened there. We did hear some gun shots. Within minutes about 350 armymen attacked our village Paazipora and opened fire with light machine guns on people working in paddy fields and collecting driftwood and grass for their cattle in nearby forest. We have recovered 25 bodies so far. At least 50 people including some girls from this village are still missing. They also set fire to 19 houses in the village," said Ghulam Qadir Dhobi, 65-year old farmer from the village. He broke down when he said, " They raped our women. They killed eleven people of the age group of 60 to 80 years."

The villagers, mostly farmers, wearing filthy clothes and frightful look on their fallen faces, repeatedly narrated horrifying incidents of a first ever mass killings of this magnitude after the

state was declared a disturbed area on July 5, 1990 conceding more powers to the army and the paramilitary forces to shoot to kill or destroy houses which had been in use as hideouts for the underground militants.

Each one of them strongly refused the Government's assertion that those killed were militants. "We swear by our Almighty Allah. We swear by our Prophet Muhammad, (PBUH) that none of them was a militant. We would not be so shocked had they (the army) killed even a single militant. You see, they were school-going children and they were old men with long grey beards," said Malik Ghulam Rasool, member of the State Legislative Council belonging to the National Conference and representing this backward area. (Malik Ghulam Rasool was also shot dead by soldiers of BSF in Handwara town on October 1, 1990 when soldiers killed 25 civilian and set the entire town on fire.) The middle-aged legislator added, " I myself saw bodies of at least two school boys. They were Farooq Ahmad Bhatt, 15 and Nazir Ahmad Dar, 18." Tears rolled down from his eyes when he said, " The skull of little Farooq Ahmad Bhatt, a student in the 9th class, had been broken open with the stroke of a rifle butt."

Farooq Ahmad Bhatt's father, Ghulam Ahmad Bhatt, 50, an activist in the State Government Employees Federation, said, "My son, Farooq was going to school when armymen chased him. His school-bag fell down and he stopped. They told him to raise his hands above his head. Then they shot him in both his hands. He started running towards a field. They caught hold of him and shot him, right in his chest. " Bahtt added, "My another son, Bashir Ahmed Bhatt, a medical student, was also shot dead. I myself was beaten up most mercilessly by army men despite my telling them that I was an Indian and was associated with the All-India Government Employees Federation with Sukumar Sen as its president. I told them that I had taken part in conferences in Bombay, Calcutta and Delhi as a nationalist."

He showed his back which was swollen with beating by the soldiers. His daughter, Naseema Akhtar, a nurse by profession, asked everyone in a state of unconsciousness that she wanted her two brothers back. A villager said that with the death of Bashir Ahmed Bhatt, the village was deprived of having the first would-be-doctor from this remote village after 43 years of "independence".

Ghulam Ahmad Bhatt also said that his 35-year old nephew, Mohammad Jamal Dar, a mentally retarded person, was also shot dead in the house of a neighbour. " He was under treatment in the Mental Hospital in Srinagar for about two years. We brought him to the village only a few days ago. Even he was not spared by ruthless killers of the Indian army," he said.

The sleepy village surrounded by thick woods and paddy fields and inhabited by about 1,500 people presented a ghastly look of a devastated locality. Nineteen house reduced to ashes and the survivors including panicky children looking around aimlessly.

"I am still looking for the mortal remains of my 8-year old daughter, Haleema, who was burnt alive when armymen set my house on fire," lamented Sara Bano. She had beaten her face in anguish which was bleeding profusely. Her husband, Ghulam Nabi Tantray, a salesman in a cooperative supply shop, had also been taken away by the soldiers, she said and gave a loud cry.

Mali Begum, a widow, dragged this correspondent in an act of desperation towards the new graveyard weeping and saying, "My two sons are buried here. See for yourself they were shot dead right before my eyes outside my house before setting that on fire. They were Mohammad Shafi, 19 and Mohammad Yasin, 18," she said and added that her another son, Mohammad Yusuf 22, was taken away by the armymen. "Have they killed him too?" she asked with nobody answering her query. Her last son, Sallem Ahmad, 11, studying in the 6th class, was weeping loudly holding firmly his mother's both hands. His both eyes had turned blood red.

Mohammad Ramzan Tantray, 60, said that three women were gangraped by about 14 soldiers in a house in adjoining village of Balipora where they had taken refuge after crackdown on Paazipora. He identified them as Jana Bano and Taja Bano, both 25 and married recently, and Ateeqa Bano, an unmarried girl of 18 years of age who was also deprived of her two wrist watches and Rs.

5,000 in cash after being gangraped for about one hour. When I saw her bruised breasts, torn out clothes and blood stained trousers, I thought, was this the real face of Indian democracy" said Tantray. The raped women whose houses were deserted in the village had since left and were hiding in a adjacent village.

A local police officer, requesting anonymity, confirmed that three women had been raped and that he was registering a case on his own because the villagers had not come to file the complaint in the police station perhaps feeling shy.

"We will offer more sacrifices but we will not remain in India anymore," said an infuriated Nazir Ahmed, 22, a teacher in a local school." What can they give us to compensate our innocent blood shed in the lanes and fields of our village? Only freedom and nothing short of that," he added and began shivering in rage."

The killing had caused further alienation of these people and they were speaking in terms of "freedom, martyrdom and shedding of more blood to give more sacrifices for achieving the goal of independence." Abdul Rashid Dar, an employee in the state Horticulture department, said that an army commandant had come to the village on Saturday, August 11, and had apologised for the wrong done by his soldiers." We told him straightaway, give us 26 dead bodies of your army men against our 26 villagers butchered by your soldiers. He could not answer this and left the village," he said.

In order to ascertain facts in an elaborate way and to have the judicial version on this unfortunate happening, this correspondent, along with three other Srinagar-based newsmen, sought an interview with the Deputy Commissioner of Kupware, Mushtaq Ganai, and the Deputy Inspector General of Police Baramulla, Mohan Raj who were perhaps holding a meeting in the residential house of the Superintendent of police, Kupwara, S.K.Mishra. We sent our cards but were not called in at least for 15 minutes when we kept waiting in scorching sun outside the main gate on the roadside.

Both the Deputy Commissioner and the D.I.G Police, who seemed to be quite confused while receiving us tried their best to evade our questions saying, "We can't tell you anything because we are still tying up with the army" Mushtaq Ganai, telling a blatant lie said." Only seven houses were burnt and we are finding out as to how many of those killed were militants." The D.I.G Police added, "The army says that there was quite a sizable number of militants in the list of those shot dead,"

"Did you ascertain the facts yourself" he was asked. He had no answer to offer. We had been told by residents of Paazipora that

the affected village and the bereaved families were visited by these officials 30 hours after the gruesome tragedy had occurred. "They came, stood here for sometime and assured us that all those missing or arrested would be traced out or set free by Saturday evening. They are still missing," said Abdul Hammed, an educated youth of Paazipora while speaking to this correspondent in the afternoon on Sunday, August 12.

The villagers complained that both the Deputy Commissioner and the D.I.G. Police behaved as if nothing had happened." "We have yet to see a Deputy Commissioner like Mushtaq Ganai, who is a coward and has no conscience," said a villager, " Our state police and the civilian officers are functioning in this sensitive district as if they are slaves of the army men. They have no moral courage to reprimand the army for this massacre." said another villager.

A government spokesman, when contacted on phone by this correspondent on the morning of Monday, said that the information given by the authorities appears to be correct.

The information given out by the government through the radio in its news bulletins repeatedly said that "24 terrorists were killed in Paazipora in the wake of a cross-firing which took place on Friday."

Greater Kashmir, Srinagar. April 18, 1990.

The Plight of The Kashmiri Detenues

It is now an admitted fact that besides occurrence of series of horrifying and terrifyingly ugly events in the valley, hundreds of our brethren especially the youth, who appear to be the main target of repression and oppression, were and are being, despite large scale woeful protests, arbitrarily and indiscriminately whisked away every day and dubbed as terrorists. Initially confined in the Concentration Camps and Interrogation Centres and later detained in various and far-flung-jails within and outside the state, wherefrom it is not practically and conveniently possible for them and their relations to

have regular interviews under rules to know about their mutual welfare or to make adequate and satisfactory arrangements for their defence according to their free choice. Or to have legal consultations with lawyers or to effectively pursue their detention cases before the State Advisory Board constituted under Public Safety Act.

Virtually they are in exile and as such have patently been punished before they could prove their innocence. The magnitude of their misery and torture and the difficulties, hardships and inconveniences undergone by them and their friends and relations or even their advocates can safely be estimated and measured by the location of the jails, where they have been shifted from the Interrogation Centres and detained. These jails are located in Allahabad, Varanasi, Coimbatore, Jabalpur, Jodhpur, Patna, Bhagalpur, Satna (M.P.) and Tihar jail in Delhi. Besides, these jails, the other detainees are detained in the Central jail, Srinagar and in various jails in Jammu province and different known and unknown interrogation centres in the State.

It was in this background that prior to our recent visit to various jails, three of us visited in July 1990, different jails in Jammu, J.I.C., Jammu, Central Jail Naini in Allahabad, and Central Jail Jodhpur. We have already briefed the press regarding the details of that visit and the worst and pathetic condition of the detainees detained there in the said jails of our inability to have interview with the detainees in Central Jail, Jodhpur, Rajasthan, including the hostile and poisonous atmosphere created against us there by the members of communal forces, such as members of Shiv Sena, BJP, Hindu Maha Sabha and Vishva Hindu Parshad within and outside the High Court premises, who, without any lawful cause, excuse or justification demonstrated against us and vehemently contested and opposed the simple application moved by us for grant of interview with the detainees, lodged in the jail, purely on communal and regional basis, administering serious threats to us and exposing our life to serious peril and danger. In consequence we returned without pursuing further the application.

It is highly regretful that though the detainees, whether committed to jails within or outside the state are, mostly educated, and men of public importance commanding status in life and society yet, while detaining them in the prisons of the State or while shifting them from the State prisons and Interrogation Centres to the

prisons outside the State, the State Government have not decided or specified their class. As a result they faced worst conditions in the prisons for a pretty long time, which we noticed and recorded during the course of our earlier visit. Though in the absence of such decision or specification the jail authorities could, under the provisions of the order, still place them in C-Class, yet for reasons unknown this was not done with the result that they passed their days quite in miserable and sub-human conditions. By no stretch of imagination we can afford to believe or make others or our clients believe that neither the concerned authorities of our state were or are conversant with the order and the extent and scope thereof nor were or the jail authorities of outside the State equipped with the relevant/corresponding rules. Non-specification and non-communication of the class by our state authorities and non-implementation of the relevant/corresponding rules by the jail authorities outside the state, constitutes, according to the detenues (Kashmiri Muslims), a willful commission and omission on the part of the authorities concerned clearly speaking of communal and regional bias as also invidious discrimination aimed at killing the Kashmiri detenues by inches. Anyway, alongwith the order of our hon'ble High Court, permitting us to interview the detenues in jails in Hiranagar, Kathua and Kot Balwal in Jammy and central jails in Allahabad, Varanasi, Combatore, Jabalpur and Jodhpur.

On Sept. 5, 1990, we visited Sub-jail Hiranagar and had interview with number of detenues including Mian Abdul Qayoom, Advocate, Mr. Shakeel Ahamed Bakshi and Mr. Haffezullah and others. Mr. Qayoom informed us that though the detenues detained there are men of high ranks, status and public importance entitled to better class, yet the state Government has not so far decided or specified their class, with the result that the Jail authorities have indiscriminately placed them in C-Class.

On the same date, we visited the interrogation centre at Kot Balwal. Though there were number of detenues under interrogation in the Centre, yet we were permitted to see only three of them, Masood Andalib, Mohammad Idris and Tanvir Ahmad. These three detenues were brought out of the torturers cells of the Centre to a room one by one and in tatters handcuffed and bare-footed.

In between us and the detenues was a cage-like iron-fencing at such an unreasonable distance that instead of shaking hands, each

one of us could hardly shake finger-tips with them. We were allowed to talk to them only in Urdu or Hindi language, whereas talk in Kashmiri language was strictly prohibited. In fact these detainees wished to narrate the stories of miseries, torture and agony suffered by them and convey to us the facts in support of their defence, but they could not do so in the circumstances, nor could they express themselves before us in any manner whatsoever freely and comfortably. Moreso, when officials of the Centre, who by themselves were source of harassment and embarrassment to the detainees remained present within the seeing and hearing distance during the interview. We pressed for interview with rest of the detainee-victims in the Centre but it was refused without assigning any lawful cause.

One of the detainees, Shafiq Ahmed Mir, complained of cardiac ailment and acute eye-sore. Despite repeated requests made by him to the jail authorities, he was not provided with any medical treatment except that a compounder visited him and gave him some tablets.

The detainee, Merajuddin Soofi, complained that besides other torture during interrogation, needles were pricked in one of his ears, with the result that he has partially lost the hearing power. He also made strong grievance against the jail authorities that despite repeated requests and persuasions he was neither treated for this ailment nor referred to a specialist.

The detainee, Irshad Ahmad Baqal, who according to his statement was subjected to most cruel and inhuman torture, including touches of Red-Hot Iron rods to his back for hours at the Interrogation Centre, Kot Balwal, complained of acute back ache. We noticed the burns at his back which really produced a sight of horror

All of them narrated horrible stories of the most inhuman acts of torture and bestiality to which they were subjected for a pretty long time in the Interrogation Centre. Ghulam Nabi Dagga said that apart from other tortures, they were being mercilessly and ruthlessly beaten with fan-belts in the Centre every day and most of them were given regular electric shocks. It was further stated by Mr. Dagga that it was shameful that even unabashed acts of gang-sodomy were committed on various innocent detainees presently in the jail by the guards and other in the Interrogation Centre. These detainees one and all have serious health problems,

which, if not properly and satisfactorily investigated and treated are bound to worsen their health further.

On September 10, 1990, we met twenty six detenues in Naini jail in Allahabad and met them for two consecutive days. In fact each one of them has contracted serious ailments such as acute eye-sore, chest, urine and stomach problems.

It may be recalled here that during our previous visit to this jail in July 1990, the condition of these detenues was more miserable and pitiable than we observed during our recent visit. In fact they were then treated as worst than chattels. However, during our recent visit to the jail, we found their condition slightly better than before, which indicates slight change in the attitude and behaviour of the jail authorities. Their major grievance was that though they have been lately placed in C-Class and provided some of the amenities of that class, yet this is a bitter reality that their health is in deteriorated condition requiring immediate attention and medical treatment.

We visited Varanasi jail in U.P. on September 12, 1990, and found 41 detenues lodged there.

The condition of these detenues is worst than all other detenues. They have been detained there in dirty solitary cells existing on first floor of the jail. During the interview all detenues were brought before us within the jail premises. However, while they assembled before us, many of them were taken by great surprise to mark each other's presence in the jail as till that date they had absolutely no knowledge of the detention of each other in the jail. At a glance we found them all in tatters and quite dirty condition and as soon as we shook our hands with each one of them, we immediately sensed foul smell. On enquiry, they stated that in the absence of even C-Class amenities and facilities they have been passing their days in worst miserable conditions and are being treated as worse than cattels. One inspection of the cells by us in presence of the jail authorities, we found they were most dirty and unhygenic, emitting bad smell. As far the bedding, they had been provided only a sub-standard *Dari* each and nothing more. About the cells it may be added that the ceramic pots provided to the detenues for passing stools and urine during day or night hours and their delayed removal and cleaning added to the pollution of the cells

and the foul smell. These cells are filled with highest voltage lamps. It is in the morning alone that the detenues are singly-brought-out of the cells to wash their faces within a minute and pass the stools or urine in a tin placed in a vacant polluted cell, where they get further contaminated. It is however, once in a month that they are allowed to take bath and are provided with a small piece of detergent soap instead of bathing soap. The pubic hair remover soap provided to and used by them seems to have adversely affected their potency. They have been forced to shave their heads because of unhygienic and infectious conditions of the cells, where, they had contracted dandruff and lice.

Though an amount of Rs. 17 is to be incurred on the daily food and toilet of detinue placed in C-Class, hardly an amount of Rs. 3 to 4 is being spent on each one of them per day. As a consequence, they get extremely poor, dirty and filthy diet, infested with insects, causing stomach infection, dysentery and other serious stomach disorders especially piles, which really has reduced them and grown them extremely weak and feeble. Such ailments have become chronic as no adequate and satisfactory medical treatment has been provided to them.

The detenues informed us that one of them, Ali Mohammad Ahanger of Anantnag, passed away in the jail due to the atrocities and torture suffered by him in the Interrogation Centres and for want of medical treatment facilities within the jail and was reported to have been buried somewhere in the jail premises. It was stated that though the detinue, who was extremely in all ailing condition, repeatedly made entreaties to the Jail authorities to provide medical treatment to him, yet there was absolutely no response.

Not to speak to giving call for prayers, *Asaan*, the detenues are not even allowed to offer prayers. When one of the detenues, Abdul Hamid Baba, once gave the Call, he was mercilessly and ruthlessly beaten by the Lambardars (Life convicts), who have been kept on watch and work duty. Due to the torture suffered by him, Mr. Baba has sustained some injuries and passed black motion.'

We found detinue, Ghulam-ud-din of Uri, dumb-founded. We tried to make him talk but all in vain. It seemed that he was under serious mental shock. One of the detenues stated that due to the mental and physical torture, he was rendered mentally retarded.

He regretted that even in the face of deteriorated health condition of this detainee, he was not provided medical treatment. The detainees have never been brought out of the cells to have a walk in the lawns and terraces of the jail. The detainees were served lunch in our presence on the date, which comprised a small quantity of cooked rice full of insects etc. and beans boiled in simple water. They stated that on protest against such poor and infectious diet, the Jail authorities made it clear to them that the food served to them was not being served for their healthy survival but with a view to kill them (Kashmiri Muslims) by inches.

Abdul Majid Khan of Langet, who has suffered a permanent disability due to the torture inflicted on him in the B.S.F. Interrogation Centre, Kupwara, revealed that his legs and hands were for so many days consistently immersed in ice-cold water and simultaneously on taking these out of the water, hot boiled water was poured thereon. This cruel torture developed gangrene in his fingers, for which no treatment was provided or arranged and finally all the fingers of his hands and feet were got amputated in Jammu. He is not as such able to either take the meals or wear clothes or do any other work and is therefore being assisted in all respects by another detainee. The detainees stated further that they have never seen the Superintendent of the jail as he never visits them. Among the jails visited by us, we found the detainees detained in this jail in the worst sub-human and miserable condition and regarded as worse than convicted criminals.

Regarding the miseries, torture and atrocities perpetrated on the detainees in the Interrogation Centre, the victimised and ailing detainees/undertrial in the aforementioned jails it was, stated that subjecting the victims to agonising physical and mental torture, including inhuman acts like third degree methods or administering electric shock or touches of hot-iron and red hot iron-rods with skin, or burning alive in acid-drums, pouring acid on naked parts of youth, shooting down the injured defacing and disfiguring the shot ones, or forcing at the gun point to take stool, and urine in place of diet and water, was a common and usual ugly practice in the Concentration camps and Interrogation Centres. While revealing the heart-rending and outrageous stories of the miseries and tortures suffered by them, they in short, remarked that the torture and cruel inhuman and degrading treatment to which they were subjected

within the camps and the centres, if related in detail would certainly make the mankind forget worst instance of bestiality and brutality of medieval ages known to the history.

Concluding this report we would like to express that thought the doleful and woeful plight revealed by the detenues in the jails and witnessed by us really disappointed us, yet we found the detenues in all the jails visited by us with a smiling brow and with extremely high morale and spirit, prepared to face boldly even the worst. Our second part will cover our visits to Coimbatore (Madras), Jabalpur and Jodhpur.

(Excerpts from a report prepared and released to the press by advocates, Zahoor Ahmad Shah, Riyaz Rasool Khan, Bashir Ahmad Khan and Abdul Majid Dar. Srinagar, September 1990.

A Bleeding Kashmir Appeals to Mankind

Kashmir is bleeding, burning, groaning under brutalities unheard of in the history of repression. Daily killings, periodical massacres, arson, rape, theft, robbery-all this under the cover of a seven-month long curfew, interspersed with relaxations of varying duration, at the hands of the so-called security forces of India who entered Kashmir 43 years ago, under an agreement, with the avowed air of safeguarding her freedom from tribal invaders. A reign of terror has been let loose against millions of unarmed people including old men, women, school-going children and babies. The details of Indian terrorism will easily fill up a volume and are outside the scope of this brief appeal.

Since the imposition to the seven-month old curfew, no day has passed when people have not been killed. In between, there have been large-scale massacres, the most gruesome of which have been those of Batmaloo, Gawkadāl, Zakoora, Tengpora, Hawal, Lal Chock, Handwara, Baderwah, Bandipora, Anantnag, Baramulla Islamia College. On each occasion the Indian Forces fired into the crowd and killed hundreds of unarmed and defenseless people which include old men, women and children. The goriest of all these massacres, surpassing Jalianwala Bagh and Mylae massacres was

that near Islamia college. Over two hundred mourners in the huge funeral procession of Maulana Farooq were mercilessly gunned down.

Two sets of pall-bearers were shot down one after the other and even the dead bodies were not spared.

It has now become a matter of routine that whenever the Indian forces take offence they break open the doors of houses and shoot the inmates indiscriminately. Such victims include pregnant women, babies sucking at their mothers' breasts as well as the suckling mothers, bedridden patients and pious old men and women.

Not content with shedding innocent blood, the Indian forces have now started setting fire to residential houses and business establishments. This was done before but is now freely indulged under the pretext of treating Kashmir as a disturbed area. Recently the main market at Sopore was burnt down to ashes and the security forces stopped fire fighters to do their duty. Soon after, two whole villages in Magam were also set on fire. In this arson several innocent residents were also burnt alive who were prevented at gun point by the Indian soldiers to escape from the flames. Some markets and streets of the Srinagar city have also been destroyed in arson.

The Indian forces have beaten even the beasts of the jungle and cast an unerasable stigma on the face of humanity is their brutal raping of innocent women. Chanporah, Lal Bazar, Sopore, Wadwan, Pulwama, Handwara, Kupwara and Uri are mute witnesses to the most shameful deeds that have ever been committed under the sun. In Chanaporah an innocent girl had to jump from the third storey of her house and get killed to save her honour from the brutes who had let themselves loose on the women of the area. In Sopore, 2 rapes were committed in a single day and the victims included pregnant women, old ladies and mothers of one-month and two-month old babies. The area of Wadwan saw 41 women raped in a single night. At Badasgam a bride and her maid were pulled out of the bridal car and raped in the broad day light in the presence of the groom and his companions and the groom himself was all but killed. Brutality reached its limit when a father was forced to strip his unmarried daughter naked.

Under the pretext of conducting searches, the Indian forces enter residential houses, beat and kill the inmates and make away

with cash, jewellery and other valuables. Hundreds of houses have so far been robbed in this way in all areas of Kashmir.

Imprisonment without trial will be an euphemism to describe what the Indian forces are doing in Kashmir. Hundreds and hundreds of innocent people have been and are rounded up and imprisoned at unknown places in India. Some of these imprisonments remain unknown even to the top executive authorities like the Governor of the State.

All the prisoners-innocent or otherwise-are subjected to worse than third degree methods of interrogation in torture cells called Interrogation Centres. In Anantnag, Tral, Handwarah and Srinagar deadbodies of blooming youths have been dropped by the authorities with their eyes plucked out, their noses and ears hewn off and their bodies riddled with holes and scars of burning iron rods. In comparison, Israel and South Africa are civilized and the Nazi gas-chambers seem, in retrospect, kind and humane. Young prisoners are taken to the line of control and shot dead and announcements are made that they died in encounters with the security forces.

For the past one decade, the Indian authorities and their puppet regimes have been dismissing government servants on grounds of harbouring anti-India feelings. But the persecution of government servants has become much more intense since December 1989. All Muslim Officers including policemen are suspect and have been reduced to naught. More than 150 officials have been dismissed summarily. Others are being warned of unforeseen consequences.

The Indian forces have devised ingenious and hitherto unknown ways of humiliating Kashmiris and dealing fatal blows to their sensitive psyche, people are made to lick off with their tongues anti-colonial slogans painted on walls. Most people's tongues bleed and at least two people were reported to have died in consequence of this brutal exercise. *Imams* (prayer-leaders in the mosques) were made to sweep streets with their beards which are symbols of religious piety and honour. Several people were made to drink filth from gutters. In Anantnag-whose original name was Islamabad and hence appears in all the signboards there--people were made to rub off word 'Islamabad' as Islam happens to be a part of this name.

Thus one of the blackest chapters of genocide and persecution in human history is being written in Kashmir. India has imposed a strict ban on the news emanating from this unlucky land and banned even humanitarian organizations, like the Red Cross, to enter the valley.

We appeal to the world conscience to awaken and lend us succor in the worst crisis of our history. We appeal to the human rights' organizations like the Amnesty International, to prevail upon India to let it visit Kashmir and see for itself the plight of its people. We appeal to the Red Cross to have the Indian ban lifted from its humanitarian activities in Kashmir. We appeal to the world media to highlight the atrocities and indignities which are regularly perpetrated against innocent Kashmiris. And-as the Indian preachers of *ahinsa* (non-violence) are preparing to receive Nelson Mandela-we appeal to the world to ask India to begin its charity at home.

Signed and issued in Srinagar by 292 Teachers of Kashmir University, Bemina College, SP College and Govt College for Women, Maulana Azad Road on August 9, 1990.

Total Condemnation

In the recent past due to military and paramilitary crackdowns in the Kashmir Valley, many innocent citizens were harassed, beaten and even tortured during the searches, more particularly children, old men and women folk. Hundreds of innocent and precious lives were lost due to indiscriminate firing by the para-military forces, so much so, a worst than Jalianwalla Bagh was enacted during the peaceful procession of mourners at Islamia college who were carrying the body of late Mirwaiz Maulana Mohammad Farooq. This Chamber cannot remain a mute witness to these acts of barbarism and strongly condemns the:

Brutal killing of Maulana Mohammad Farooq, the Mirwaiz of Kashmir Muslims.

Barbaric killing of innocent Kashmiri brothers and sisters near Islamia College on May 21, 1990 in an unprovoked firing by para-military forces.

All those who gunned down innocent Kashmiris in the recent past.

Unlawful and illegal detention of thousands of innocent Kashmiris detained unlawfully for months without any trial.

Illegal and forcible occupation of hotels, guest houses and cinemas by para-military forces.

Throttling the voice and freedom of local press which has deprived the people of Kashmir from expressing themselves before the world. Deployment of military and para-military forces on the streets of Srinagar city and other towns of the Valley.

This Chamber expresses its deep sorrow for all those who have laid down their lives and expresses its sympathies with the bereaved families and prays to Allah for their eternal peace.

We strongly urge that;

A forthwith stop be put to the killing of innocent people;

All innocent persons arrested be released immediately;

All hotels, guest houses, cinemas must be vacated from the forcible occupation of para-military forces and the vacant position restored to the owners;

Para-military forces must be removed from all streets of the valley;

Press, especially local must be given full freedom of expression.

In the end, we strongly urge the conscious citizens of the world to join us in condemning these inhuman acts of barbarism and use their good influence to put a stop to them.

President, *Kashmir Chamber of Commerce*, Srinagar June 5, 1990.

Handwara in Kashmir: A Town Bombed?

It has been yet another massacre of innocent Kashmiris and setting ablaze of an entire shopping complex in Handwara, a remote town, 70 km north-west of Srinagar which had been bristling with activities full of life only till yesterday and looked deserted and devastated today, October 2, 1990, the birth anniversary of Gandhi.

Besides killing of atleast fifteen civilians (death toll finally reached to 25 mark) including one middle-aged woman and a sitting member of state legislative council, soldiers of the Indian Border Security Force (BSF) set fire to the entire market reducing to ashes three hundred shops, residential houses and several commercial buildings.

When this correspondent visited the town, he saw that out of a total population of about thousand people, hardly a few hundred could be seen around. They had gathered in Handwara hospital where the bodies of those shot dead by the soldiers had been kept for burial in a newly set up martyrs-graveyard.

"It was about 11-30 a.m. yesterday (Monday, October 1, 1990) when some armed militants fired on a BSF patrol in the main and the only market in this town. The BSF soldiers retaliated with opening indiscriminate fire on civilians and set fire to entire market gutting it completely," said Sharifuddin Shariq, a member of the dissolved legislative assembly who added that five bullets also hit his house though no damage was done to his family or himself. "These soldiers are cowards. They cannot harm militants but take revenge from civilians. They also shot at and injured two teenaged girl students who were returning from their tutor's house."

According to Abdul Khaliq, block medical officer, the BSF personnel also confined about one hundred members of paramedical staff in the town and asked them to keep standing near a stinking litter outside hospital for more than two hours. "They charged that my colleagues fired on them. We could not argue with them because they were seemingly out to kill all of us." He said that his

two sons, Shahnawaz, 14, and Saleem 12, were harassed to the extent that he had to send them to Srinagar immediately.

Eye witnesses said that about six hundred soldiers fired on people in the market indiscriminately and threw some half-dead bodies into shops. which they set on fire simultaneously. All the fifteen bodies kept in the hospital bore bullet wounds as well as burn marks on them. One body was completely charred beyond recognition. About one dozen people were busy in preparing newly dug up graves for their burial outside hospital premises.

"They did not spare even an honourable member of the state legislature, Malik Ghulam Rasool," Said Chowdhry Mohammad Ramzan, former minister in the state government till imposition of the Governor's rule in January this year. He said,"about six soldiers called 65-year old Malik out of his house in the town when he was having his midday meals and shot him dead from point blank piercing his neck with two bullets. If such is the fate of a senior legislator at the hands of the "security" forces, how can an ordinary citizen feel that he was safe here?"

Bilal Ahmad, a college student, narrated how his father, Ghulam Nabi Shapoo,45, a government employee was also killed. "They brought him down from his Tehsil office where he was working, shot at him three times and then threw his half-dead body into the office setting it ablaze at the same time," he said.

Another local resident, Abdul Majid Bandy, said,"They also killed my brother most brutally," He said that his brother Mohammad Amin Bandy, 40, a businessman, was going in his taxi thought the market along with two other persons. "They did not even ask him to stop but fired at him from his back side and killed all the three persons in the taxi. When they dragged out their bodies out on the road, they again opened fire on them repeatedly though they had already died," The taxi, which was also burnt, lay in the ruined market, a testimony to the soldiers' naked brutality.

C. Phun Song, special commissioner of the district, confirmed that among those killed were old men and one woman also."I was told that one militant was also killed. The head constable of the Kashmir Armed Police, Ali Mohammed, had also been shot dead." He did not rule out possibility of some more bodies still to be recovered from the debris and rubble of shops and houses some of

which were still burning despite the incident having taken place more than twentyfour hours ago.

"The head constable, Ali Mohammad, was shot dead by the BSF right inside the main gate of Handwara police station when he tried to come out to find out how the entire market had caught fire. "We four constables, including Ali Mohammad, were near the gate of the police station, when we were fired upon by the BSG immediately. Ali Mohammad died on the spot and another constable, Abdul Azis, was injured seriously," said a constable Abdul Qayyum. Blood stains were still there inside the gate of the station testifying to the murder of Ali Mohammad whose body still in uniform was being taken to his home village for the last rites.

"We did not know what has happened to our family members who have fled to other villages after the massacre and devastating fire," said Abdul Rashid, a local shopkeeper, who said that he was not allowed to take out anything from his cloth shop, the burning of which caused him a loss of nearly three hundred thousand rupees. "They did not allow any civilian to enter the burning areas till everything was reduced to ashes," said Rashid.

The Fire Officer of Handwara Fire Station, Ghulam Mohammed, confirmed that the firemen were not allowed to extinguish flames for about four hours from 12 noon to 4 P.M. "when we finally reached the burning market along with ten fire-fighting vehicles, we found ourselves totally helpless. We could save nothing because there was nothing left which could be saved," he said. According to the details provided by him, the completely burnt property included 31 residential houses, 55 commercial buildings, about 300 shops, 4 cowsheds in which one dozen cattle perished, 20 small shops (Khokhas), 50 paddy stacks, one passenger bus, two trucks laden with apple-fruit, three taxi cars, one scooter, two buildings belonging to the Muslim Auqaf Endowment Trust, one post office, one Tehsil Office, the social welfare department, the cooperative bank building and some trees including one magnificent green Chinar tree. He put the approximate loss to property alone at about two hundred million rupees. "We have registered a case and the police is further investigating," said Ghulam Mohammad.

Surprisingly, the properties belonging to the Kashmiri Pandits (Hindus) and the Sikhs, had not been touched at all by the

forces and the temple and the Gurudwara were seen in tact along with about 60 houses of the Hindus now migrated outside the Kashmir Valley. "It was only with the grace of Waheguru that our houses were saved," said Mahender Singh, a local Sikh cloth merchant whose house and the shop had not been damaged.

"We do believe in the grace of Waheguru, but let me tell you that soldiers had only to destroy the properties of the Muslims and that's why they did not burn the houses belonging to the non-Muslims," said Mohammad Amin Butt, editor of the local Urdu weekly, *Tameel-e-Irshad*, whose office in the Auqaf building had also been burnt.

An official spokesman while confirming the deaths said, "We have lost one soldier. One militant has also been killed," When asked how the civilians were killed, he replied, "They were caught in cross firing between militants and the forces." He could not come out with any satisfactory answer. He also parried the question as to who set fire to the houses and the shops.

A local poet somehow concluded saying, "Today, the whole of India is observing the birth anniversary of Gandhi, the apostle of peace and non-violence for the Indian people, and it is on this day that soldiers of Gandhi's land have crossed all limits of humanity to perpetrate brutalities on us in order to annihilate a particular community, incidentally known as the Kashmiri Muslims." He said and wept bitterly.

Kashmir is A Flame.

The State of Jammu and Kashmir, particularly the greater valley, is passing through a nightmare. It has become a place of misery and sorrow, weeping and wailing, death and destruction for its own people. Each day brings in its wake more and more atrocities for them at the Indian 'Security' forces. And all this only for asking India to redeem their constitutionally guaranteed pledge to grant the people of the state their right of self-determination in keeping with the unanimously accepted UN resolutions. But, far from silencing Kashmiris into submission, each atrocity and display of brute force

and terrorism let loose by the unbridled and trigger-happy 'Security' forces of India, has been putting new vigour and resolve to their struggle for attainment of their goal. Eversince 1931, Kashmiris have been engaged in a relentless strife against their continuous subjugation, their zest and zeal, sense of solidarity and spirit, of sacrifice for attainment of freedom and self-rule has reached the zenith in recent months, thanks to the ever-mounting tyranny and torture which is being meted out to them in blatant exercise of the extra-constitutional powers assumed by a Governor imposed by Delhi and his agents with the tacit consent of the Government of India.

Angered by desperation over their failure to stifle the unflinching faith and determined voice of the people in the pursuit of their cause, the Indian-imposed Governor, his advisers and 'Security' forces have been taking to avenging their ignominy with still cruder and barbaric atrocities which, by any standards, should put the soul and conscience of the so-called democratic and secular India to shame.

India does not consider itself bound by its own constitution so far as Kashmir is concerned. Brushing aside the mandate of its constitution, the government of India has not only deployed armed forces and other forces for the maintenance of law and order in the state, but has also invested them with the powers of arrest, search and seizure and worst still, completely side-lined the local machinery for law and order.

But that as it may, the powers of arrest, search and seizure conferred on the security forces are required by the very order of investment to be exercised by them in accordance with the provisions of Criminal Procedure Code, but there is hardly any case where such provisions have been followed by them. Like vultures, the Indian 'Security' men jump at the young ones in the age group of 13 to 30 years when they are moving about on the roads and streets or working in their fields or on their shops and pick them up indiscriminately for interrogation which often goes on for days or weeks together during which they are subjected to indescribable agony and torture. Those who perish during such interrogation are left at the control room, Hospital, Police Station or near the locality from where they were taken while those who are able to survive this trauma, unless detained under the Preventive Detention Law, are

released with severe injuries, crippling and maiming them for the rest of their lives. The raids and searches conducted by the Indian 'Security' forces are equally aggressive and violative of norms and standards of a civilized society, leave aside the rules provided in the Criminal Procedure Code. The usual pattern followed in conducting searches and raids by Indian "Security" forces has been that they would cordon off a locality, enter the houses forcibly, ransack the same, conduct ideological X-Ray by trying to discover the interest of inmates from the books and papers found in their possession, beat the inmates, molest and rape the families and even remove the cash and jewelry and other valuables.

In various localities the inhabitants were herded together at a vacant place away from their houses and grouped into three categories-gents, ladies, and young ones and thereafter one person from each house, usually the male owner or occupant, was taken along for conduct of search. This process usually took the whole day during the course of which the inhabitants of the locality were made to sit at the vacant place under chilling cold or scorching sun. And at the end of the process, young ones were usually carried for the interrogation, in the course which they were subjected to torture and released only if the concerned authorities felt so pleased. Worse still, there are cases where the Indian 'security' forces have made the people sip gutter water or lick faecal matter while they were herded together in vacant spaces during the course of such raids. The raids and searches were usually conducted after imposing of curfew in the concerned area, even without reference to the district administration who only are competent to impose the curfew.

There is no specific law governing imposition of curfew in the state and that the same can be imposed by the District Magistrate acting under Section 144 of the Code of Criminal Procedure as and when necessary. The District Magistrate is supposed to make a speaking order, and at any rate, he had no power to order shoot-at-site for the violation of such orders. An indefinite curfew was imposed in various parts of the State on 20th January, 1990, which continues in force except that the relaxation which was initially intermittent and limited to 2 to 4 hours is now available more frequently and for longer periods but never between dusk to dawn. People were shot dead for curfew violation and in some cases even curfew passes were not honoured. The people are

entitled to know the source from which the order imposing curfew has emanated. They are also entitled to know the contents of the order and it should not be difficult for the Government to release the full text of the order to the press, as and when the same is made, unless, of course, the order already made in January still holds good.

Excerpts from a report by Basic Human Rights Committee, Srinagar October, 1990.

A Migrant Kashmiri Hindu Exposes

The Conspiracy

The Editor, Daily Alsafa , Srinagar.

Dear Editor,

Kindly allow me to draw the kind attention of Kashmiri Muslim brothers, through the columns of your esteemed daily, towards the miseries, hardships and the exploitation of their Kashmiri Pandit brothers. I know that my community has lost the affection, love, respect and the good will of the Kashmiri Muslims for having betrayed them very recently. I feel ashamed to admit that my community has stabbed the Kashmiri Muslims in the back. This all happened at the insistence of former governor Jagmohan. some self-styled Pandit leaders and Hindu fundamentalist organizations exploited the situation and the Kashmiri Pandits became refugees, in their own homeland. I think it will be better to narrate the events, that took place, that led to the mass migration of the "Kashmiri Pandits" from the valley.

In the first week of February 1990, a word was sent to the members or the Pandit community in Kashmir and they were asked to migrate to safer places. This message from the former governor Jagmohan was conveyed to the Pandit community through some self styled Pandit leaders. Pandits were told that the government had plans of killing about one lakh to one lakh fifty thousand Kashmiri Muslims particularly, the youth in order to over come the uprising against India. Pandits were assured that they would be looked after well, that they would be provided relief, free ration, jobs and free accommodation. Pandits were assured that once the proposed

massacre of the Kashmiri Muslims was completed and the movement was curbed, they would be sent back to the valley. That is how most of the Pandits left. My community now understands that it was merely made a scapegoat and it was a very crude way of painting the mass uprising against India as nothing but a communal flare up. Indian government tried to fool the world by telling members of the world community that the uprising against India was in fact the handiwork of some misguided Muslim fundamentalists who had turned against non-Muslims and had thrown them out of their homes.

To start with, Pandits were treated well and a lot of sympathy was shown for them. Very soon, the scenario changed and things have become very difficult for the Pandit community. Our community is looked down upon and Pandits are now treated as nothing but parasites. Even those Kashmiri Pandits who are settled here call us refugees even though they also queue up for free ration and the relief. The locals treat us as invaders and behave like that. Abnormal rates are charged for milk, vegetables, grocery and other things of daily use. Even the house rent has sky rocketed. Imagine the rent for a room of 10 x 12 dimensions is around rupees one thousand to twelve hundred. You can very well understand the plight of members of the Pandit community under these circumstance.

Our young men have become vagabonds because they have nothing to do except for roaming on the roads. Some of our young men have taken to drugs because of great mental and emotional turbulence. Our women are treated like whores and prostitutes. People from this (Jammu) region are under the impression that shortage of money is a sufficient reason for our young women to sell their bodies and honour.

This change in the scenario should have brought our self-styled leaders to their senses but it seems that they have learnt nothing from these events and the sufferings of their community. It is quite clear that they have completely sold themselves, heart and soul, to the Hindu fundamentalist organizations like the B.J.P and the Shiv Sena and are speaking their language. Some of these self-styled leaders are still harping on the demand for the abrogation of article 370. Some of them are issuing idiotic statements for reconquering Kashmir, so that Indian tricolour is hoisted on every roof

top of Kashmir and *Bande Matram* is sung in every lane of Kashmir. Some self-styled Pandit leaders, at the behest of their masters, are harping on the BJP. and Shiv Sena formula of changing the Muslim majority character of the state. I demand that these traitors of our nation should be stoned to death. I also appeal to every Kashmiri Pandit not to become a prey of such malicious propaganda and denounce these self styled leaders.

Kindly convey our hand folded respects to the "Mujahdeen" of our nation. Kindly convey our hand folded respects to all our brothers and sisters. We salute their courage and their valour.

Sincerely Yours.

K.L.Koul, "CHAMAN" Chanpora. Srinagar.

At present: *Nagrota Camp, Jammu, Al-Safa News*,
Srinagar, September 18, 1990.

Runaway Pandits Confess

"Yes, we have betrayed our motherland."

There can be no dispute about the fact that the Kashmiri Pandits (KPs) were made into scapegoats by Jagmohan, some self-styled leaders of our community and other vested interests.

The drama was staged by some communal organisations like the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) Rashtriya Swayam Sewak Sangh (RSS) and the Shiv Sena in connivance with the state administration. In this drama, the main characters were played by Advani, Vajpayee, Mufti and Jagmohan and the state administration was made to play the role of a joker.

It's an open secret now that the Indian occupation forces had drawn a plan to massacre a larger section of the Kashmiri Muslims, particularly those in the age group of 14 to 25 years so that the people could be enslaved and subjected for all times to come. According to reliable and well-informed sources, the plan was to make the KPs migrate from the valley so that the mass uprising against occupation forces could be painted as a communal flare-up and the massacre of the Muslims could be termed as a fight against

the communal forces and measures for restoration of law and order. The orders to foreign journalists to vacate the valley and restrictions on the local press should be seen in that scenario and perspective. The idea was to keep the world community ignorant of the real issue and create a cover for the sinister designs of the occupation forces.

Some self-styled leaders of the Pandits, led by none other than a stove-mechanic-turned-politician and pimp of Farooq Abdullah (former Chief Minister of the State) named B.H. Jattu, begged the Pandits to migrate from the Valley. We were told that our migration was very vital for preserving and protecting "dharam" (religion) and the unity and integrity of India. We were told that our migration would pave the way or realising the dream of *Akhand Bharat*. We were made to believe that the valley was about to be conquered by Pakistan, with the active support of local Muslims. We were given to understand that it was purely a war between Hinduism and Islam. At the same time, we were assured that as soon as the people of the Valley were silenced and made to surrender, we shall be sent back to our homes. **THAT DAY HAS YET TO COME AND UNDER THE PRESENT CIRCUMSTANCES WE DO NOT SEE ANY SUCH HOPE.** We now understand that it is not a war between two religions but a struggle for independence, which is the birth right of every human being.

It is a very well known fact that the local Dogras are treating us as nothing but PIGS and DOGS though they spare no efforts to squeeze us. The locals are exploiting us and we have in fact become money-spinning machines for them. Whatever is given to us in the name of relief passes on to them in the shape of house rent and charges for essential commodities but they still have a grudge against us. They treat us as parasites.

We feel ashamed to admit that we have betrayed not only our motherland but even those who have given us love for centuries together. We also feel ashamed to admit that we have committed a great blunder by playing our part in communalising the freedom struggle whereas we should have been a part of it.

The Pandits rotting in Jammu, can be divided into three categories. In the first category are those, who are already settled in Jammu and have their own houses. These Pandits treat us like

invaders and call us "refugees" even though they also are getting the benefits by fraud and proxy which are meant for migrants only. The second category consists of those Pandits, who have come from the slums in Srinagar back home. These Pandits came from the slums in Srinagar like areas of Habbakadal, Gangpatyarr, Rainawari etc and most of them have no permanent source of income in Kashmir Valley. They are more than content on receiving relief and have particularly nothing at stake in the valley. That is how members of this category are more vocal and take a lead in defaming the Kashmiri Muslims because they do not want to return home. Most of these Pandits have given their daughters in marriage to the Dogras with a hope of getting their favours. Most of the self-styled leaders of the KP's come from this category. The third category is of those Pandits who come from a well-to do background and have left back property in the Valley

We strongly condemn the atrocities that are being unleashed on our brothers by the Indian Occupation Forces. We also appeal to the government of India and to all peace loving people of India to fulfil the promises that were given by their leaders like Jawaharlal Nehru. We also appeal to the UNO to compel India and implement the resolutions passed in 1948 for grant of right of self-determination to the people of Kashmir. We salute to their valour and courage which they are showing against the onslaught of the occupation forces. Please remind them that it is a temporary phase and that the blood of the great martyrs will be victorious very soon.

Signed by:

Brij Nath Bhan, M.L. Dhar, K.L. Kaw, Kanhaya Lal Raina, G.N. Daftari, Moti Lal Mam, C.L. Kak, Chuni Lal Raina, M.L. Munshi, B.N. Ganjoo, Ashok Kaul, C.L. Parimu, Poshkar Nath Bhatt, Pran Nath Kher, R.L. Razdan, Poshkar Nath Kaul, B.N. Bhat, Moti Lal Kaul, Ashok Dhar, Kamal Raina, H.K. Kaul and S.N. Dhar.

Jammu, September 22, 1990. Reproduced from the al-Safa, Srinagar October 18, 1990.

The Fleeing Pandits

Amit Baruah

The flight of Kashmiri Pandits from the valley is a tragic commentary on inter-community relations in the State. It has ruptured the cultural links between the two communities.

According to information given in Parliament recently, till end July, 48, 894 migrant families were registered in the Jammu region and 11, 438 in Delhi. The other figures are: Uttar Pradesh (857), Rajasthan (61), Haryana (94), Maharashtra (39), Punjab (1,293), Chandigarh (216), Madhya Pradesh (75), Himachal Pradesh (66) and Gujrat (54).

But there is a flip side as well. Several Kashmiri Pandit families continue to live quietly with support from their Muslim neighbours both in the rural and urban areas; their existence is low-keyed and they do not want to attract attention to themselves.

Prithvi Nath of Nunar village, off the Srinagar-Leh highway, is one such who has stuck on, with his family of six. "There is no difference now and then for my family," he told "Frontline." A little apprehensive initially, as almost everyone is in the Valley these days, Prithvi Nath gradually opened up. An employee of the Public Works Department, he said some 60 to 70 Pandit families had fled in March. Why did he not go? "I have never had any problems with my neighbours. *Yeh to hamare paap hain ki is tarah ki sitihi yahan ban gayi hai* (it is our sin that has created such a situation in the valley)", he said.

Another Pandit, whose family lives in Nunar, is Som Nath. "My wife, my father, we are all living here. *Yahan par aise log hain jo hamare upar marte hain* (There are people in the village who are ready to sacrifice all for us)." He is, however, not able to say why several families belonging to his community had left. Some Nath works in the Irrigation Department apart from being a farmer. He said he had been attending to his work as usual. "The fields of the Pandits who have left the village are lying there. Their houses are as they had been left. No one has touched them," he said, sitting outside his house.

Ghulam Mohammad Sofi, a local shopkeeper, is one of Nath's closest friends. Several villagers said they (the Muslims) had offered to protect the Pandits. "As far as we are concerned nothing has changed," Sofi said.

The families of Som Nath and Prithvi Nath are not the only ones staying out in the areas. There are others, though few in number, proving that amicable community relations are not a thing of the past in the valley. Even in the urban areas a sprinkling of Pandit families continues to live alongside their Muslim neighbours.

Even in Srinagar prominent citizens made efforts to persuade the minority Pandits not to leave. A small committee was formed for the purpose, but the efforts were unsuccessful. Governor Jagmohan, it is alleged, encouraged the migration

A senior state government official said the Pandits have been visiting their houses in Shivpora, Indira Nagar and Sonawar colonies. "About a month ago 60 percent of houses of pandits were occupied. None of the houses have been taken over. Not a single lock has been broken," the official maintained

Frontline, Madras, September 29, 1990

An Appeal To The World Conscience

Today KASHMIR is bleeding and burning as a result of the undeclared war on Kashmiri people by the Centre's mercenary Armed Forces, and the first causality when war comes is truth. This is exactly what the Indian Government is doing by misleading the freedom and peace-loving global community through its officially controlled media.

The Indian Forces are causing an unreasonable stigma on the face of humanity amidst illegal raids on the houses and gangraping innocent women including brides, pregnant women and mothers of two month old babies.

Thousands have been detained without legally required notification of arrest or any access to due process of law. The journey

to jails is incomplete without a stop at the interrogation centres (Torture Cells) and the interrogation here has assumed a new and filthy meaning as many youths with their bodies riddled with holes and scars of burning rods were found.

Hundreds of civil servants have lost their jobs without undergoing the formality of even a show cause or an inquiry.

The budding youth and children of this oppressed and unfortunate society are being made to live in ignorance by depriving them of the right to seek education through constant closing down of the educational institutions, for the simple reason of their protest against the arbitrary detention and killing of their friends and gunning down of a law-teacher from the Kashmir University on September 2, 1990, albeit he had disclosed his identity through officially issued card while coming out after offering prayers at a shrine in Khanyar, Srinagar.

The State terrorism by the Indian Forces has reached its climax by permitting them to indulge in acts of arson. And the Indian Forces have started setting fire to residential houses and business establishments. In these acts of arson, the fire tenders are being prevented from putting out the fire and very recently in Sopor Town where about one hundred houses were set on fire, even two fire services personnel received bullet injuries and the most recent precedence can be held from the fact that the security personnels did not even spare the Jammu and Kashmir Armed Police personnel by killing one head constable at Handwara and the army also set ablaze about three hundred residential houses and as many business establishments, and also set ablaze five hundred residential houses and many business establishments in Islamabad five days ago.

The Gobblin was propagated by India that the present uprising is merely one of fundamentalist demagogues, can be judge by the fact that the Sikhs, who are also non-Muslim are living in the valley, while the Hindus have fled from the Valley at the instigation of Indian Government.

We appeal to the Secretary General of the United Nations and the five permanent members of the Security Council to use their good offices to pressurise the Government of India to respect the basic rights of the people of KASHMIR and STOP The persecution of Kashmiris.

We also appeal to the World Media and the Human Rights Organisations like Amnesty International to bring to light the ground realities existing in the Valley of Kashmir by deputing their spot verification teams and have an assessment of the genocide and flagrant violation of the basic Human Rights of innocent KASHMIRIS.

Jammu and Kashmir Students' Association, Srinagar,
November 1, 1990.

Burning of Islamabad

Ghulam Nabi Khayal

This time it was Islamabad, comparatively a peaceful town, 50 km south-east of Srinagar. The Indian soldiers comprising troopers from the Central Reserve Police Force (CRPF) and the Border Security Force (BSF) set on fire about two hundred residential houses and an equal number of shops in densely populated localities of Chini Chowk, Malk Nag, Mohall Shah Sahib and Hazratbal, in the wake of a crossfiring between militants and the soldiers in which one BSF soldier and four civilians were killed. Three mosques including 300 years old Shrines of Hamadan were also gutted in devastating fire. It was in the afternoon of October 27, 1990.

According to the Deputy Inspector General of Police, Radha Vinod Raju, the fire to the houses was caused due to cross-firing and that the CRPF men themselves informed the police about the incident, but local residents however said that security forces themselves torched houses after sprinkling gun-powder and petrol on them "They brought petrol from their vehicles even in their helmets," said a local shopkeeper whose shop had been reduced to ashes.

The fire officer in Islamabad station, Bashir Ahmad Abbasi, confirmed that security forces did not allow about six fire fighting vehicles to proceed to burning areas for about two hours. He said that driver of the leading vehicles, Ghulam Mohiuddin, was shot at by the Indian soldiers right from the front smashing the glass panes of the vehicle and also injuring him seriously. Ghulam Mohiuddin

was shot in his right hand which severed his three fingers and also in the chest. Blood stains were still there on the driver 's seat of the vehicle. His three severed fingers had been buried in the premises of the fire office. Abbasi also complained that about one hundred soldiers entered the fire office and beat up firemen severely. "They dragged out one of our officers, Ghulam Mohammad Butt, and tied him with ropes after beating him mercilessly," he said.

Mohammad Shafi Pichoo, a middle aged tailor, said, "They sprinkled gun-powder on our houses and set them on fire. They even dragged out my wife holding her by neck. I could hardly save my life in a volley of bullets fired on people by them."

Mohammad Azad, a local businessman, said that one 22-year old Mohammad Altaf Shapoo tried to rescue himself from the soldiers but they also dragged him out of his house and shot at him from point blank. "These beasts then tried to throw his body into a burning house but some courageous women took possession of the body." He also added that during torching of the houses, the troopers shouted at inmates calling them "rascals and terrorists" and threatening them with shouts like, "Come out, you dogs and take freedom from us,"

In the premises of a local mosque was lying the body of 15-year school going student. Rohail Mohammad, laid on a cot and covered with blood-soaked white sheet of cloth. He had been shot in his lower abdomen "Can you believe that he could be a militant, as the D.I.G. Police has told you? asked his bearded father, Ghulam Mohammad Butt, 42, and employee in the education department. "I have given my dead son in sacrifice for the freedom of the Kashmiri nation and I am proud of him. I have no regrets,"he said with tears in his eyes already dried up.

Mohammad Syed Shah, a member of the dissolved state Legislative Assembly, said, "The security forces cordoned off the burning houses and warned that no one should come out. This means they wanted to burn them alive. They somehow managed their escape from the back doors but properties and belonging of crores rupees couldn't be saved." One could see that most of the fire-sufferers were still searching out from the rubble of the burnt houses and shops what could have been saved from the flames.

About twenty houses were still smouldering when I visited the areas the next day.

Despite having suffered great loss of life and property, the people in all the four localities demonstrated utmost urge to free themselves from the Indian occupation. "The people of Kashmir shall not rest and shall not abandon their guns till Indian are thrown out of this pious land of Kashmiris," said Mohammad Hussain Shah in an emotion-choked voice. His right hand been burned with the gun powder while he extinguished fire in some shops. A youngman, Farooq Ahmed, raised the slogan, "What we want," which was responded to with a thunderous "freedom" by about two hundred people gathered in the interior of the town.

Professor Shorida Kashmiri, a poet and writer, said it was a planned conspiracy to annihilate the Kashmir Muslims and destroy their properties. "Why don't they burn houses of the Sikhs in Punjab. They will not, because it is only the Muslims who are to be made their target.

The entire town looked like a graveyard after indefinite curfew had been imposed by the forces simultaneously with torching of the houses. One could see main doors of the houses located in Nabi Basti on the main road locked from outside and inmates fled to other places in fear and panic. Hundreds of gun totting soldiers of the BSF and CRPF were patrolling deserted streets in the town and even curfew passes of civilians were not entertained by them. "They do not allow even us to go inside affected localities," said A.R.Shah, an officer in the Kashmir police.

Tourist Raped by Indian Forces

A Canadian tourist, Ms. Laura Jane Lambie, who arrived in Srinagar a few days ago, has accused the security forces of "kidnapping and sexually assaulting" her in the hills overlooking Dal Lake on the outskirts of the city.

The 24 years old tourist said the "worst in her life" happened last night: She had gone to boulevard for a stroll around 11 a.m. While walking back to her hotel she started a conversation with

three local youths. When they were just short of the Centaur Hotel on the banks of Dal Lake, three men with regulation weapons and walkie talkies stopped her. She was told that it was "dangerous" to walk with local youths. Then she was taken to the Chashma Shahi gardens up in the hills and questioned in a "military-like location," before being subjected to the worst ever" ordeal of her life.

First they began interrogating her and she was asked to show her passport a number of times. "Initially they were nice and friendly to me, but later their attitude change, and I was accused of being a drug peddler, a charge which I vehemently denied," Ms. Lambie said.

Suddenly, one of the men, who claimed they were high officers and said no one could harm them, put a jacket on her face and she was removed to an unknown place. "It was pitch dark in the hills. I screamed and cried for help but no one came. There was military camp near the place where I was kept, and I do not know how many men gangraped me," she alleged.

The Canadian tourist was initially reluctant to speak to newsmen taking them as "security force men in civies" After journalists established their identity, Ms Lambie narrated her story.

Ms. Lambie said she was robbed of Rs, 300 being thrown on the road down the hills at 4.45 a.m. this morning. Some boatmen came to her rescue and took her to a Shikara. Now, she is being looked after by two other foreign tourists.

Though Ms Lambie has reported the matter to the Canadian High Commission in New Delhi, she feels that the security men may harass her again. She wants to leave Kashmir at the earliest. When asked why she did not report to the local police, she said, "They are impotents. Indian forces can get away with anything they like".

Hindustan Times, New Delhi, October 13, 1990.

Rape of Laura

She had arrived in Srinagar on October 7, 1990, from a trip to Ladakh and was lodged in a houseboat on the banks of Dal Lake

along with her three friends. Little did she know of the fate that awaited her in Srinagar.

Born in 1966, 24 year old Miss Laura Jane Lambie, a Canadian agricultural science student was on a stroll on October 11 on the boulevard in Srinagar when it was just getting towards darkness. Near the Centaur Hotel, she started having a chat with three local boys asking them about what was going on the Kashmir. She was immediately waylaid by personnels of the Indian National Security Guards (NSG) travelling in a white Maruti van. They were armed with automatic weapons and were also carrying a walkie-talkie with them. One of them, tall slim, warned Laura not to get into conversation with the local Muslim youths. "All of them are very dangerous terrorists and can also molest you at this desolate spot" he told her.

When the guards asked as to who she was, she replied, "A Canadian." The guards then asked for her passport which they said was fake and not genuine. "You shall have to accompany us to the police station," and thus Laura was asked to board the vehicle.

Instead of any police station, Laura was taken to Oberio Palace Hotel where the guards had a drink from their own bottles because the bar in the Hotel was closed. She did not drink though she was invited to do so. The guards then ordered her to board the vehicle again because they told her it was not safe for her to go back to houseboat at that late hour for, the Kashmiri militants could kill her at any spot. The guards also took away her purse. Laura was taken to a garden near Chashma Shahi. It was 1 a.m.. on October 12.

One of the guards directed Laura to undress but she did not oblige. Her clothes were then torn and she was laid on the ground and gangraped. She cried under the open sky but there was no one to listen to her moans and shriek except the sleeping state Governor, Girish Saxena, who must have been in deep slumber in Raj Bhavan, which is situated only a few hundred yards from the scene of incident. For a change, Laura was taken to another adjacent garden and the gang-rape by five guards of the helpless victim continued. Finally, she fell unconscious.

Semi-conscious Laura was then dropped on the roadside, at a slight distance away from where she had been picked up the previous evening. On being sighted by the locals, she was carried to

the police station at Nehru Park where a case for kidnapping and rape was registered under section 366 and 376 of the Ranbir Penal Code under First Information Report No 90/04. The police officer at the station recommended a medical examination of the victim and Laura was taken to Lal Ded Women's Hospital in Srinagar.

"All Indian men are scoundrels, I'll not permit you to examine me," Laura shouted at the male doctor in the hospital. Two lady doctors then examined her ascertaining that "dead sperms were found in her uterus and in the passage leading to it. There were scratches on her thighs, back, arms and breast only to testify that she had resisted.

Ms. Laura Jane Lambie told pressmen that very day how brutally she was raped by the "security" guards. The matter when brought to higher authorities in the state and also when it was taken up with the government of India by the Canadian High Commission in New Delhi, the state police registered a case against the guards arresting two of them whom Laura had conveniently identified in a batch of sixty four guards paraded before her. She recognised them despite the fact, that both of them had shaven off their beards. Ms. Laura was kept in protective custody by the state authorities.

The authorities acted so swiftly in view of the Canadian government taking a serious notice of the incident and it was in a record time that inquiry was conducted and culprits punished.

Here lies the difference between rape of a foreign and that of a Kashmiri lady. The latter is treated as an allegation and passes off unnoticed and unwept.

Translated from Weekly *Takbeer*, Srinagar, October 31, 1990.

Events Speak

At 11 a.m. on 20 April 1991, Indian Security Forces reportedly killed seven men and boys, aged between about 12 and 35, in Malangam in the Kashmir Valley.

They all belonged to the family of Raja Ali: they included his four sons, Khan Wali, Sattar Yaqob and Babu: his grandson, Rasheed: and two of his brother's sons, Ismail and Gulaba. According to witnesses, members of the Border Security Force (BSF)

116 Battalion, shot them after their hands had been tied behind their backs. Reports also suggest, that the seven had been beaten prior to being shot and that their bodies were further disfigured when, after having been shot, they were dragged down the mountains by the BSF to Bandipur police station. The BSF reported to local police that the seven had been killed in "cross-fire".

Mirza Khan, an area commander of the Al-Buraq militant group, had been shot earlier on 20 April [1991] in Malangam. He was reportedly found with a weapon, but the circumstances of his death are not known. However, before his death, Mirza Khan had allegedly taken shelter in the house of Raja Ali. It was in connection with this incident, that Raja Ali's family members were questioned and subsequently shot. These killings came a day after Governor Saxena said in an interview that the [Indian] security forces had been told to use restraint, claiming that: "We are taking every action to ensure, that any ugly incident is not allowed and that excesses are minimized".

Amnesty International [AI] is concerned that the 20 April killings by the BSF in Malangam appear to have been extra-judicial **executions of unarmed civilians**. It is not known whether an inquiry has been ordered into the incident or whether members of the BSF, 116 Battalion, potentially implicated in the incident have been removed from positions of authority over Kashmiri civilians.

Since early 1990, there has been an increasingly violent campaign for independence in Kashmir. Amnesty International has repeatedly expressed concern to the Indian government about reports of deliberate killings of unarmed civilians and about widespread allegations of torture and rape by members of the [Indian] security forces and about arbitrary arrests of suspected separatists or their relatives. In September 1990, the government announced that a screening committee would be set up to examine complaints of excesses by the security forces. Jammu and Kashmir Governor, Saxena, has ordered several investigations of such abuses, in one case leading to charges of murder being brought against the Director of the Border Security Force. But such investigations have

usually been conducted by police or other officials rather than by an independent and impartial body. Amnesty International does not know of any cases in which officials allegedly responsible for such Human Rights violations have been brought to justice and convicted.

Amnesty International U.S.A. April 22, 1991.

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On 8 May 1991 Indian paramilitary police forces reportedly opened fire on mourners in Srinagar, Kashmir, killing at least 14 people and injuring 48 others. Amnesty International is concerned, that a number of them may be victims of extrajudicial execution and killed without provocation.

Hundreds of people had gathered in a children's park on 8 May [1991] after a procession through the city, held in mourning for 68 Kashmiris killed in an armed encounter with Indian soldiers, who intercepted them trying to enter the Kashmir valley from Pakistan-held Kashmir on 5 May. According to police an armed man in the crowd of mourners opened fire at the paramilitary police first. Eyewitness accounts dispute this, saying they heard one shot followed by many security forces bullets and did not know who shot first. The exact circumstances of the initial shooting incident remain unclear. However, about 10 minutes later, the paramilitary police reportedly opened fire without provocation on a group of about 200 people near a shrine, killing at least three people. In all, hospitals reported that 14 people were killed, including a student named Farooq Ahmed, an elderly woman and a young girl, and that many more were injured.

Amnesty International welcomes the announcement on 9 May by the Jammu and Kashmir Governor, Girish Saxena, that an investigation would be held into the killing by the paramilitary police of 14 civilians. He reportedly stated that "It's a bad case and a major incident....We will do everything possible to tackle the situation and I am personally looking into the matter". Amnesty International is urging, that a fully impartial and independent investigation be held into the killings and that the findings of the investigation should be published promptly and in full. It is also urging that if any security force personnel are found to be responsible for the extrajudicial execution of unarmed civilians, they should be brought to justice, and that the victims' families receive prompt and adequate compensation. It is not known, whether those potentially implicated

in the incident have been removed from positions of authority over Kashmiri civilians.

Amnesty International USA, May 10, 1990.

Bleeding Wounds

Dr. Ghulam Nabi Fai

Presentation before The American Bar Association Committee on International Human Rights by Dr. Ghulam Nabi Fai Executive Director, Kashmiri American Council (KAC), June 5, 1991 Washington, DC

On May 9, 1991, Indian paramilitary forces attacked a crowd of peaceful demonstrators who were carrying the bodies of four young Kashmiris -- killed by Indian security forces -- to be buried.

A report by the *Associated Press*, carried by both the *Washington Post* and the *New York Times*, told the extent of this tragic event

The Article Stated.:

"Paramilitary troops of the Central Reserve Police Force (CRPF) opened fire on about 3, 000 people gathered at a cemetery....The troops left after shooting for about five minutes.....A woman and a girl standing next to a reporter died instantly. The girl, about 14, was hit in the head. The woman, in her early forties, was shot in the back."

The Indian forces simply fired -- unprovoked -- into the unarmed crowd of mourners. They injured many and according to press reports, killed more than 14 innocent civilians.

This is, I assure you, not an isolated incident. For the Kashmiri people incidents such as this are our daily reality.

Daily, Indian troops fire into unarmed crowds of Kashmiri civilians: they beat and rape Kashmiri women and young girls: they torture our innocent sons, and burn our people's homes and villages to the ground.

Kashmir has become a killing ground. These are the facts:

---Fact: on a regular basis the Indian Army fires into unarmed crowds of civilians, and otherwise purposefully kills innocent Kashmiri citizens.

---Fact: the Indian Army has undertaken a "scorched-earth" policy in Kashmir, burning down entire villages and communities, killings hundreds of people and displacing hundreds of families.

---Fact: arbitrary arrest, torture and detention, without trial are widespread in Kashmir.

---Fact: violent abuses against women are a regular occurrence in Kashmir -- The Indian security forces, sexually molest and rape Kashmiri women and young girls on a regular basis.

For more than a year now, the Kashmiri American Council (KAC) has been working to bring the word of this daily tragedy to the decision-makers here in Washington, and to enlist the support of the American people, to help us bring an end to this carnage in Kashmir.

The KAC is a coalition of American citizens of Kashmiri origin, who want our government to take notice of the massive human rights violations taking place in India, and to take action to stop them.

This is a difficult task. The only way we can succeed in bringing attention to our plight, and to the massive violations of human rights being perpetrated today by India, is to get the word out about the conditions in Kashmir and the state of India's human rights record.

That is why panels such as this one are so important. In hosting this forum, The American Bar Association is doing a tremendous service to the cause of truth. Only through forums like this one can we begin to tell, what India is trying to hide: that innocent civilians are being raped, tortured, and killed in Kashmir.

So on behalf of the Kashmiri-American Community I thank ABA and Dr. Bronson Howell for organizing this important event. It brings us a step closer not only to exposing the atrocities being perpetrated by India, but to bringing those atrocities to an end as well.

1) Violations in Areas of Unrest:

The conflict in Kashmir dates back to 1947 and the partition of British India. Shortly after the partition, a war erupted between the newly formed states of India and Pakistan.

The United Nations intervened and helped bring about a cease-fire. The Kashmir was divided by a cease-fire line in this settlement.

Both governments agreed that the final status of Kashmir should be decided by a plebiscite under the auspices of the United Nations. This agreement was supported by the international community in two consecutive United Nations resolutions in 1948 and 1949 -- both of which were co-sponsored and co-authored by the United States.

India, however, reneged on this agreement and annexed the portion of the divided Kashmir under its control. Today, the Kashmiri people cry out for the simple right to self-determination and for the implementation of the United Nations resolutions, that would allow them to vote on their final status.

India has answered their call for freedom with brutal suppression. Faced with a grass-roots movement for self-determination, the Indian authorities have executed a campaign of terror in Kashmir.

It is estimated by the international press that more than 2,400 Kashmiri civilians: men, women and children much have been killed at the hands of the Indian army during the last year.

Asia Watch reported recently that on August 1, 1990, a convoy of Indian soldiers, travelling in army trucks west along the road from Srinagar to the Kashmiri city of Baramulla, opened fire from the trucks for no apparent reason into a crowded market in the center of the town of Pattan. "Twelve civilians were killed in the shootings and at least 18 were injured.....After the shooting. A group of soldiers marched into a neighborhood just outside the center of Pattan, where they burned and destroyed houses and livestock."

Incidents such as this are not simply examples of independent soldiers occasionally "going too far," but examples of a premeditated policy aimed at terrorizing the population of Kashmir.

To quote the late, former Prime Minister of India, Rajiv Ghandi, just before his death, "the police have gone berserk in Kashmir."

Further, India has launched a scorched earth policy to terrorize the Kashmiri population into submission.

In its May 1991 report *Human Rights in India: Kashmir Under Siege*- under the section titled simply "Arson," Asia Watch cites many examples.

One of these is the case of the Kashmiri city of Handwara, where Asia Watch reports "Border Security Forces (recently) burned down three dozen houses and 200 shops, and sprayed bullets into a crowded central market."

In another case, on October 7, 1990, Indian Security Forces set fire to the Rangteng Kawdara neighborhood in Srinagar. The area contained 190 homes and 300 families. The fire completely destroyed 175 of the homes and a mosque and a school.

After an exchange with a small group of militants on Sept 18, 1990, in the town of Arampora, Sopore, Indian security forces went about the neighborhood spreading gunpowder and then setting the powder ablaze. The ensuing fire destroyed 70 homes and displaced 120 families. According to Asia Watch, a 55-year-old woman broke her leg, when she jumped from a second-story window trying to escape from the fire.

A similar incident occurred on October 7 in the Noorbagh neighborhood of Srinagar, when the regular Indian Army, along with the Central Reserve Police Force (CRPF), sealed off the neighborhood and then set it ablaze. When a fire brigade arrived to try to put out the fire, the security forces which had surrounded and sealed off the area, refused to allow them to enter and put out the blaze.

These are but a few of literally hundreds of such examples.

In some cases, it has been credibly alleged that Indian forces have actually used these tactics to literally cremate the living occupants of the homes they are burning. According to Congressional testimony by Dan Burton and Eni Faleomavaega, Indian forces are reported to have locked families in their homes and then set the

homes ablaze so that the occupants would die a slow painful death by fire and asphyxiation.

These reports began to filter to US from Indian-held Kashmir last fall. They are often very difficult to confirm. But an article in the newspaper *India-West* September 14, 1990 clearly documented a case, that occurred July 8 of that year. In the Kashmiri village of Kag Magam, the newspaper reported, the Central Reserve Police locked 20 people in a building which was then set ablaze by the Indian forces.

Since then, more such reports have been reaching our offices every time the Indian army burns a village. They are impossible to ignore.

There is no justifiable military purpose for the premeditated cremation of entire families, nor for burning down villages and displacing families. These tactics are not aimed at "militants." They are meant only to terrorize the people of Kashmir.

2) *Torture and Inhuman and Degrading Treatment in Custody:*

The use of torture by the Indian authorities in Kashmir has been clearly documented by various independent sources.

For example, according to the US State Department human rights report: "There are credible reports of widespread arbitrary arrest and detention. Members of the Kashmir Bar Association claimed at mid-year that between 11, 000 and 15, 000 Kashmiris had been detained."

The report continues, stating that "numerous Indian human rights groups have detailed cases of torture, during interrogation by security forces in Kashmir, including beatings, burning with cigarettes, suspension by the feet and electrical shock."

In its May 1991 report, *Asia Watch* came to the same conclusion as the State Department.

According to the report: "torture (in Kashmir) is widespread, and *Asia Watch* has obtained numerous testimonies from torture victims, who describe being suspended by hooks on the ceiling, beaten with canes, raped and subjected to electrical shock."

The report concludes that the "Indian Army and Security Forces operating in Kashmir have consistently violated... Customary International Humanitarian Law by engaging in the summary execution of suspected militants, 'reprisal killings' of civilians, torture, rape and other assaults on civilians."

I will spare you some of the more gruesome details. It is clear, however, that India regularly and viciously tortures innocent Kashmiri citizens. This fact is clearly documented by independent observers, from the US State Department to *Asia Watch* to various Indian human rights organizations.

In addition to torture, the Kashmiri peoples' rights of *habeas corpus* are denied as they are regularly held without due process of law, they are arrested arbitrarily and without just cause.

In short, Kashmir is not governed by rule of law, but the rule of the jungle. The Indian forces regularly can -- and do -- arrest innocent civilians, hold them without trial and torture them, all with impunity.

3) *Violations Against Women:*

The regular violations against women, particularly the regular occurrence of rape and sexual molestation by Indian forces, are perhaps the most disturbing abuses by the Indian forces in Kashmir.

They are disturbing because they occur against the most unimpeachably innocent of our society -- our mothers, daughters and sisters.

One particularly brutal example, documented in a report by the Jammu and Kashmir High Court Bar Association of Srinagar, occurred on May 17, 1990 in the village of Badasgam. A bride and bridesmaid were gang-raped by an Indian army detail, when the bus carrying their wedding party was stopped and searched. After the assault, the bride was taken into custody and was released only after 48 devastating hours in their hands, where she was continually abused.

In some documented cases of rape, family members are beaten and then forced to watch as the security forces rape the mothers and daughters.

It is estimated that literally thousands of Kashmiri women and young girls have been raped since the Indian crack-down began a year-and-a-half ago. *Asia Watch*, the US State Department and various independent human rights organizations confirm, that rapes of innocent women by the Indian security forces are a regular occurrence in Kashmir.

Conclusion:

Various Indian human rights groups have been able to document these various atrocities. *Asia Watch* has gone in and now provides us with one of the only full and detailed accounts of the Indian government's human rights abuses in Kashmir. A few journalists, such as Ms. Barbara Creosote of the *New York Times*, have been able to go in and see the carnage first hand.

This, however, is not enough. The Indian government still has not fully opened Kashmir to the international community.

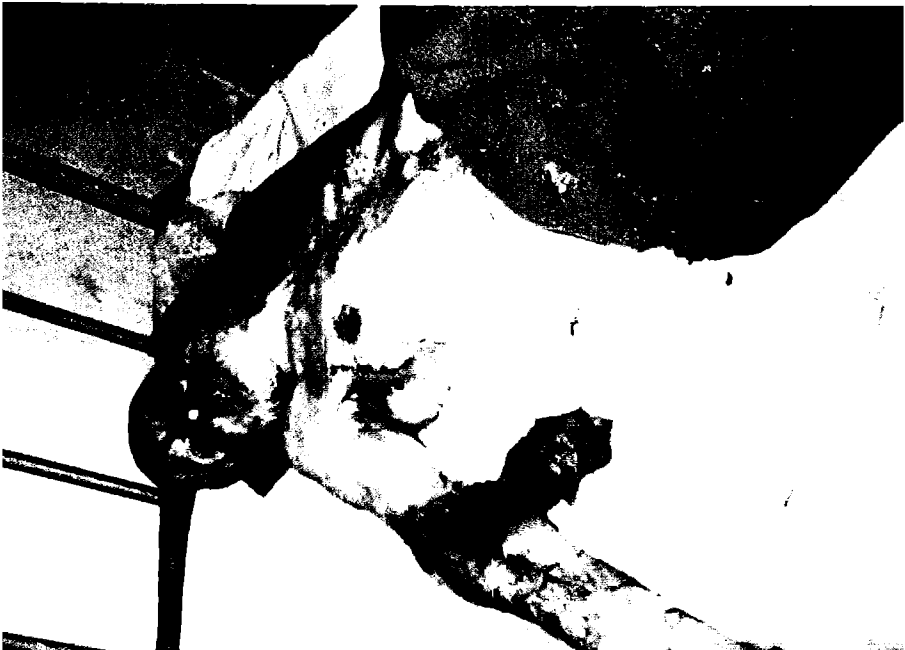
To this day as Mr. Johan Nides will tell you Amnesty International is denied access to Kashmir. AI is one of the most credible, impartial and unimpeachable sources of information on human rights in the world today. AI must be allowed into Kashmir.

Despite the fact that some journalists have gotten into Kashmir, the vast majority of correspondents are not allowed regular or free access to Kashmir -- If they are allowed access at all. Kashmir must be opened completely to the international press.

As I said at the outset, the most powerful weapon in the battle for human rights is the TRUTH. Until the truth is fully exposed in Kashmir, India has no impetus to change its ways and stop the carnage in Kashmir.



Wounds speak





Paradise lost: Two more victims by Indian Army (*below*) Genocide by Indian troops.





Srinagar: People in death shrouds lead a procession volatile spirits (*below*) Life at gunpoint.





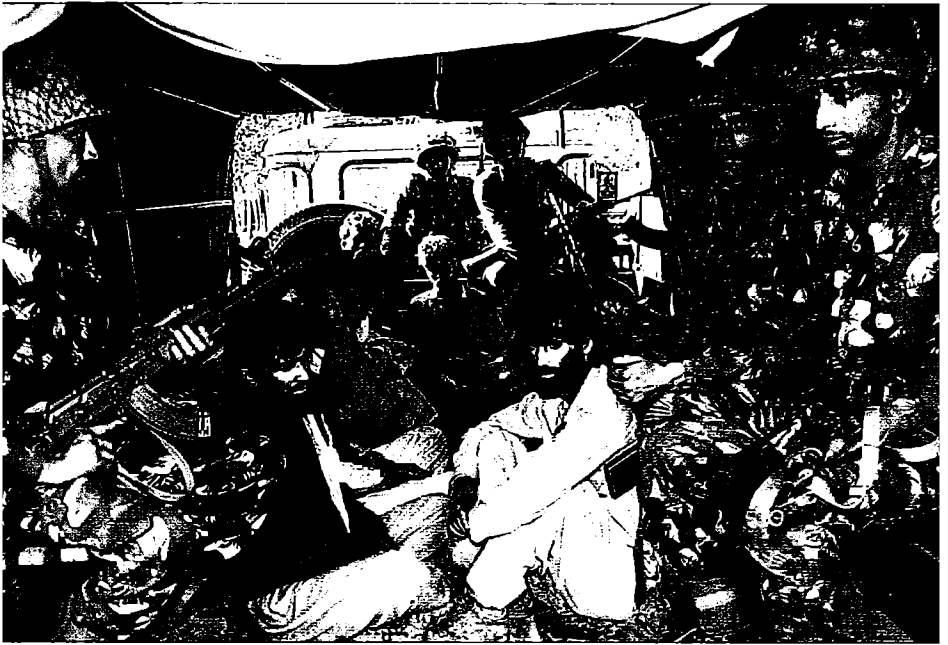
House hold Muslim women presenting a memorandum to Saxena about his brutality (*below*) Indian troops are beating lady protesters.





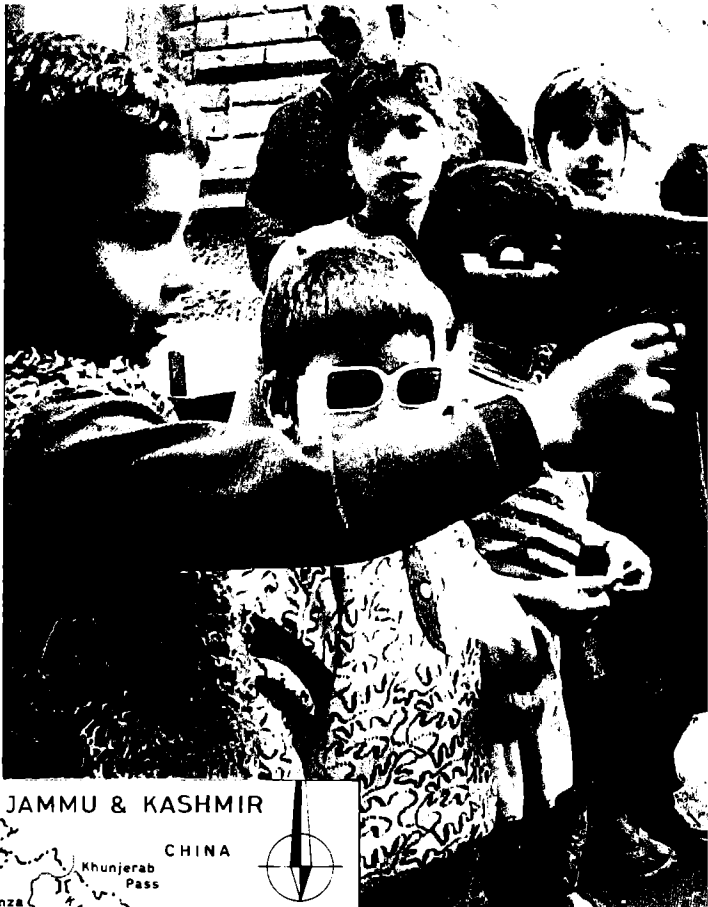
Srinagar: Women on protest bitterly against Indian troops mass killing, abusing and insulting (*below*) A demonstration "We want to snatch liberty"





Srinagar: Muslim boys captured by Indian forces during house to house search
(below) College students arrested by forces under the charge of "infiltration".





Srinagar: Children in Maisuma baz



Photographs with courtesy:
 India Today, Asiaweek, Time and some in
 Institute of Policy Studies



After police torture, a son consoles innocently her mother and some women are expressing their grief.



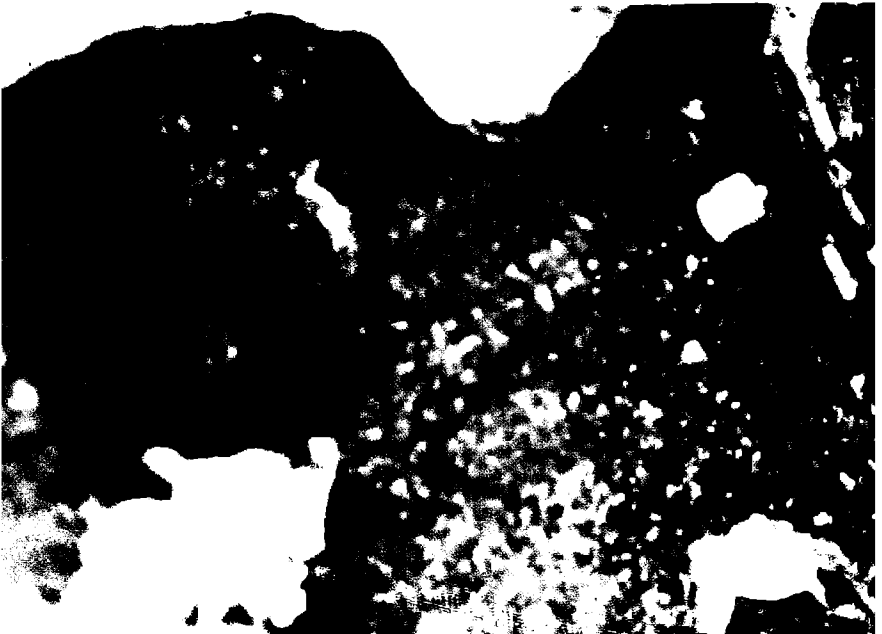


Processions, spontaneous result in frequent and blooded clashes with people after defying the troops to shoot them (*below*) The latest local attraction is the graveyard at Eidgah, where several martyrs are buried and other are initiated.





Another martyre (*below*) Price of freedom movement: women, children and men are roasted alive in their wooden houses.





Indian's attack: Ruined houses of Kupwara (*below*) Indian forces ablaze
Handwara victims shocked and outside their destroyed houses.



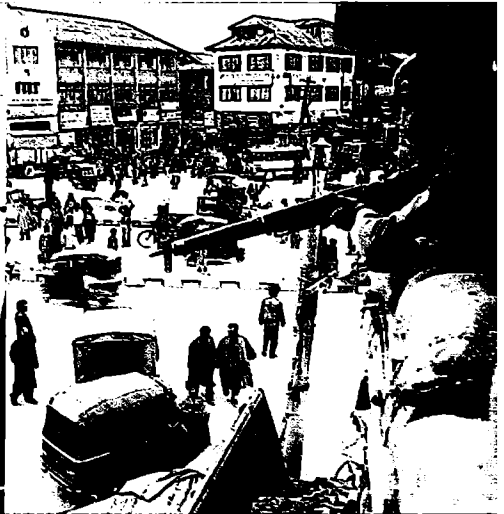


Srinagar: An Indian soldier searches a Kashmiri youth for arms (*below*) Youth rounded up by troops await ID parade.





(Clockwise) Police frisk buss passengers as a part of daily humiliation * stunned couple outside their ruined house by troops * BSF picket at Lal Chowk and one more victim.





Indian forces insulted brutally: A woman from Badhgam, showing her sister's torn trousers and other presenting her bloodstained shirt (*below*) Her son is killed by Indian troops.





(Clockwise) Sopore: a school managed by Jamat-i-Islami with Islamic spirit * Kashmiri boy with green Islamic flags seeks donation * A procession * Anantnag: posters of Iqbal and Imran Khan displayed to show their love with Pakistan.





Peaceful demonstrations of unarmed school girls and lady teachers-Indian forces confronting them.



SOME IPS PUBLICATIONS ON KASHMIR.

- Kashmir Problem: Challenge & Response** Rs.200
Ed: Tarik Jan & Col (ex) Ghulam Sarwar
pp,178.
- Kashmir: A Question of Life and Death** Rs. 10
Brig (ex) M. Shafi Khan
pp.18
- Kashmir: Struggle for Liberation (Urdu)** Rs. 250
Ed: Dr. Safir Akhtar
pp.338
- Kashmir Issue: Yesterday, Today and Tomorrow (Urdu)** Rs.95
Ed: Saleem Mansoor Khalid
pp.328
- Kashmir: Background to Dispute** Rs 12.00
An IPS Report.
pp.40.

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