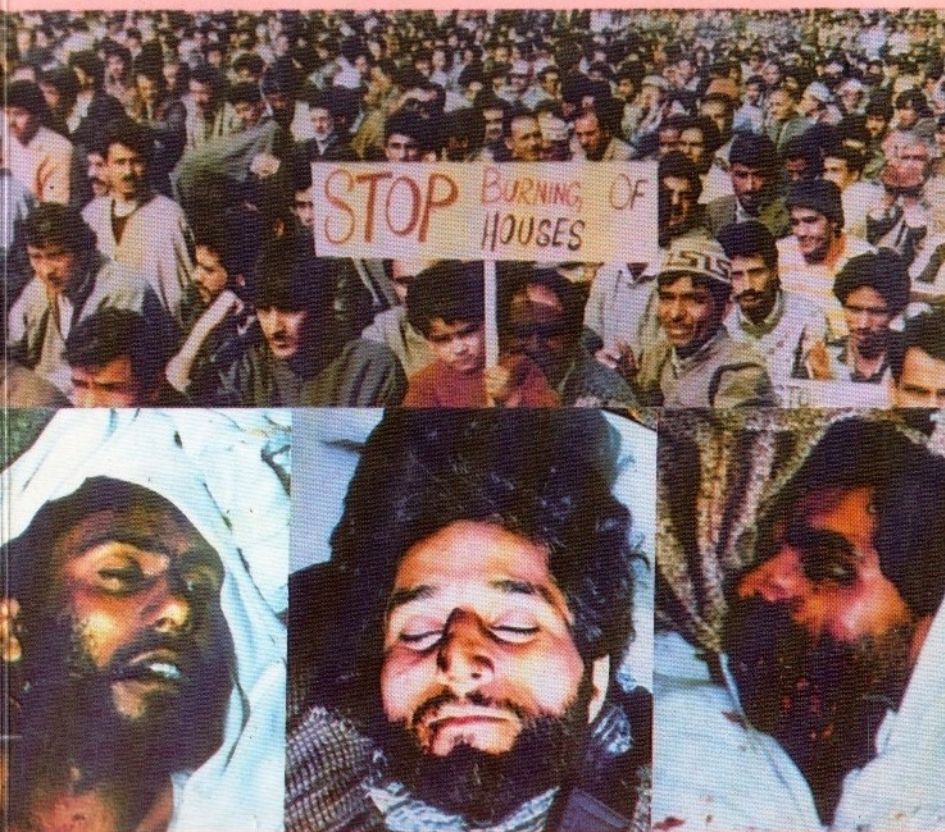


KASHMIR SUFFERS

A sordid tale told by Western and Indian Journalists

Tarik Jan
ed.



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Boiling inside, feeling the craze
Pain shall now be known
People of the Valley
Were once flowers in a garden
That the nightingale would watch
In awe.

Afeefa Sayyid
Washington D.C.

- “If, after a proper plebiscite, the people of Kashmir said, 'We do not want to be with India,' we are committed to accept that. We will accept it, though it might pain us. We will not send any army against them. We will accept that, however hurt we might feel about it, we will change the constitution if necessary.”

Source: Jawaharlal Nehru
(Statement in the Indian Parliament, June 26, 1952)

- “I want to stress that it is only the people of Kashmir who can decide the future of Kashmir. It is not that we have merely said that to the United Nations and to the people of Kashmir; it is our conviction and one that is borne out by the policy that we have pursued, not only in Kashmir but everywhere.”

“I started with the assumption that it is for the people of Kashmir to decide their own future. We will not compel them. In that sense, the people of Kashmir are sovereign.”

Source: Jawaharlal Nehru
(Statement in the Indian Parliament, August 7, 1952)

(The Friday: May 22, 1990)

Contents

- Introduction, 11
- Is Human Rights Commission deaf, dumb or dead?, 21
- Future of students uncertain, 24
- India's Kashmir war, 25
- Panel's concern over Kashmir, 35
- Kashmir under way, 37
- How to save Kashmir, 38
- New Delhi rejects calls to end curfew, 39
- Kashmiri families flee harassment by troops, 40
- Kashmir genocide aided by Western apathy, 40
- News blockade in Kashmir, 43
- Indian crackdown turns Kashmir into fortress, 45
- The slaughters of Kashmiris, 48
- Indian terror drive in Kashmir, 48
- Sing a song of freedom, 50
- Military crushes Kashmir faith in secularism, 51

- Indian governor resigns after Muslim killings, 52
- Sullied bride seen as sacrifice for Kashmir, 53
- Chaos in the killing fields of Kashmir, 55
- Kashmiri villagers tell of torture by Indian troops, 56
- Kashmiris living in virtual prison in held valley, 59
- President's rule in Valley from July 19, 60
- 22 killed, 200 houses gutted in Kashmir, 61
- WKFM Chief speaks of Indian atrocities, 62
- 135 Muslim officials dismissed, 65
- India violating human rights in Kashmir, 66
- Indians kill 4 more Kashmiris, 67
- Kashmir bleeding, 67
- Women main target of Indian atrocities, 70
- Human rights violations turn Kashmiris against New Delhi, 72
- 13 die as sleeping Kashmiris sprayed with bullets, 74
- Kashmir uprising: a tale of woes, 75
- Rape of Kashmiri women, 76
- Kashmir reign of terror by Indian troops, 77
- 9 Killed as strike cripples Kashmir, 80
- Congressional testimony of Dr. Ghulam Nabi Fai before Congressional Human Rights Caucus, 80

- Special Report: protectors or predators, 88
- BSF rampage to take revenge, 93
- Indian troops set Srinagar residential area on fire, 94
- Soldiers blamed for J & K arson, 95
- Fire engulfs market in Sopore town, 96
- Tourist alleges rape by J & K forces, 96
- 37 killed, 734 houses set ablaze in Srinagar, 98
- Kashmir darkest day, 99
- Major fire in Anantnag 500 houses, shops gutted, 100
- 13 killed, 500 houses gutted in Kashmir, 102
- Gruesome details about incident of gang-rape in Kashmir, 102
- A detailed report on gang-rape in Kashmir, 104
- US senators seek plebiscite in J & K, 109
- Indians massacre villagers, 110
- Asia Watch report on human right violations in Kashmir, 114
- Amnesty International speaks of human rights violations in India, 117
- Drift to disaster, 121

INTRODUCTION

The blatant human-rights violations in Kashmir continue unabated. The Indian security forces have so far killed nearly 18,000 people and imprisoned 30,000 in Kashmir. The figures, however, do not explain the true story of the hell let loose upon the Kashmiris by the Indian government. The Indian forces, under the Disturbed Area Act, are engaged in mass genocide of the Kashmiris, killing their youths indiscriminately, raping women at their will, burning shops, destroying houses, and terrorizing the population. This has turned the beautiful valley of Kashmir into a hell. No international human rights agency is allowed to visit Kashmir. No world body has so far taken any notice of the Kashmiri's miserable plight. International media has also given scant attention to the brutalities committed by the Indian forces in Kashmir. The world conscience remains asleep over the terrible atrocities perpetrated over the innocent Kashmiri people.

The Kashmiris' current uprising against the unjust Indian rule dates back to 1947. According to the principle of British India's partition, geographically contiguous Muslim majority areas were to accede to Pakistan and the Hindu

majority areas were to go with India; but this principle was violated in the case of Kashmir which was geographically contiguous to Pakistan and had 77 percent population consisting of Muslims. India occupied the bulk of Kashmir against the will of its majority of population and simultaneously took the case to the U.N. assuring the world body that it was committed to holding a plebiscite in Kashmir. The U.N. passed several resolutions making it binding on India and Pakistan to hold an impartial and a fair plebiscite to determine the will of the Kashmiri people. However, Indian refusal to agree to any such proposal leading to plebiscite remained the main stumbling block. Now the Kashmiri people have decided to wrest their inalienable right of self-determination from the Indian usurpers on their own and are facing the burnt of the Indian repression.

This monograph edited by Tarik Jan is a collection of eyewitness accounts of Western and Indian journalists who have visited Kashmir recently. These gruesome stories, reported by neutral or pro-India journalists reveal the dark face of the Indian imperialists engaged in pre-civilizational barbaric acts in Kashmir. Whether the world will awake to the calamitous situation in Kashmir is yet to be seen.

Dr. Tahir Amin



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Is Human Rights Commission deaf, dumb or dead?

India has reenacted the British *Raj* most infamous "Jallianwala Bagh" massacre repeatedly in Kashmir, killing several hundred political dissidents; but no "Amnesty International" team has arrived to investigate and the UN Human Rights Commission has given no indication it regards Kashmiris as human, or entitled to any rights.

However, eyewitness accounts of the atrocities committed by the Indian Army in Held Kashmir put Jallianwala's General Dyer to shame. One such account had been published by the British paper *Sunday Correspondent* on the basis of a first-hand report from its staffer William Dalrymple in Srinagar.

He says the worst massacre took place on Monday morning, when several thousand unarmed Kashmiris broke the curfew by heading out of the old city mosques. They were protesting against police brutality during a search operation the previous night. When the vanguard of the demonstration had got half way across the Gallkadal Bridge, the paramilitary forces opened fire without warning. There are no rubber bullets or water cannons in India. The paramilitary forces

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 mowed down.

A victim of the police firing, city engineer Farooq Ahmed, told William Dalrymple that he escaped death by falling flat on his face, but just as he was about to get up, he saw soldiers coming slowly forward shooting anyone who was injured. Farooq Ahmed recalled: "Someone pointed at me and shouted in Hindi, 'That man is alive' Immediately a soldier began firing at me with a machine-gun. I was hit four times in the back and twice in the arms". Seeing Farooq still alive, another soldier raised his gun, but he was asked by an officer not to waste his ammunition on a man who would die very soon anyway. Ahmed waited 45 minutes while soldiers went through the piles of bodies, finishing off survivors and kicking into the river those hanging on or near the parapet of the bridge.

Ultimately he was loaded onto a truck along with other bodies and driven around town for an hour unsure where to dump the cargo. Eventually they were handed over to the local police who took them to a hospital. The official casualty figure for the incident was 28 dead, but Ahmed and the three other survivors estimate a figure of perhaps 10 times that number.

The *Sunday Correspondent's* William Dalrymple concludes: "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 man-

handled. The problems were compounded by the fact that doctors were not issued with curfew passes and ambulances were delayed and searched, while others were forbidden to help those who had just been shot. Kashmiris speak of 400 to 500 gunned down.”

Most reports agree on the brutality of the house-to-house searches during which scores of youngmen are seized and taken away on suspicion of being freedom-fighters and are never heard of again.

Asked to justify his use of the word “massacre” to describe indiscriminate killings of Kashmiris by Indian security forces another correspondent Terry Allen Mills of the British newspaper *The Independent* told the BBC, January 29: “All that you have to do is to visit the surgical wards of the Srinagar hospitals and there you will find the victims of the often quite unfortunate police firing on unarmed demonstrators who have bullet wounds to show”.

Terry gave an eyewitness account of a “police firing on unarmed marchers, all of whom fell to the ground. Some of them tried to jump off a bridge and were impaled on a fence below.”

The Voice of America correspondent was told by the Kashmiris that in the clash on Sunday, October 21, over 200 people had been killed and about 1,000 wounded. The *Washington Post's* James Rupert reported January 25 that while the Indian Prime Minister was talking of 60 casualties, Kashmiris nationalists reported that they had been handed over 245 bodies with another 100 persons missing. BBC

correspondent Mark Tully pointed out January 24 that instead of following the normal method of mob-disperal, namely, baton-charge first, tear-gas next and firing the last, the Indian paramilitary forces begin with opening fire.

Source: (The Nation: February 06, 1990)

Future of students uncertain

The future of over 550,000 boys, and girls studying in schools and colleges in the Kashmir Valley is fraught with uncertainty as escalated terrorist violence in the past few days has further reduced the chances of early reopening of educational institutions.

Authorities, who ordered closure of educational institutions last year have extended the closure period thrice so far in view of the prevailing atmosphere in the valley.

All the educational institutions in the valley were closed much before winter and examinations of several classes could not be conducted due to escalated violence and arson which damaged as many as 103 schools in the valley.

Official estimates indicate that 12 higher secondary schools, 31 high schools, 28 middle schools and 32 primary schools were completely destroyed. ...

Admitting that 346,101 boys and 197,333 girls studying in different classes were affected by the current spate of violence, Ms. Choudhary said the government was making an effort to open these institutions as early as possible. ...

Source: PTI
(The Statesman: March 03, 1990)

India's Kashmir war

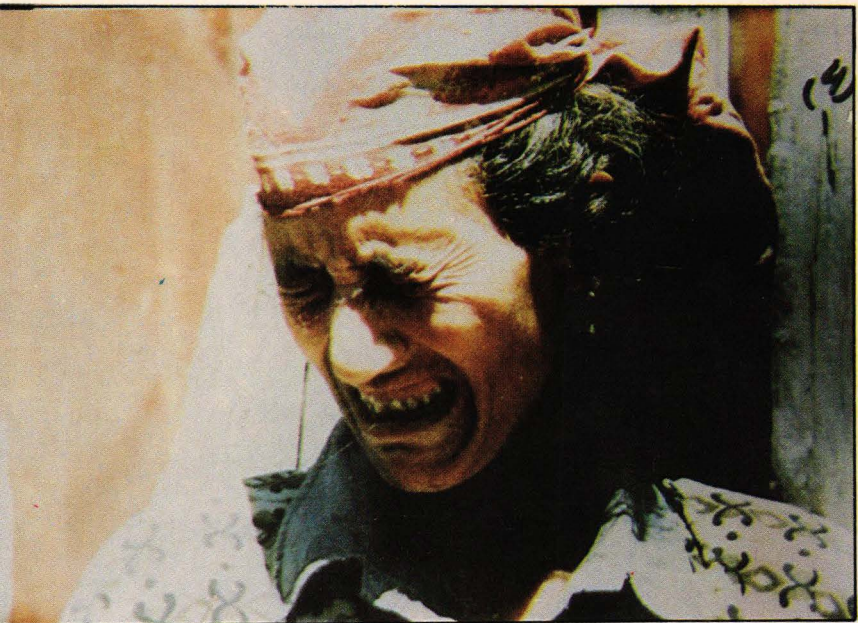
The National Front government's plan to check terrorism in Kashmir has, in practice, turned out to be an exercise directed against the vast masses of Kashmiri people, who are being denied the fundamental rights guaranteed under the Indian Constitution and those enshrined in the Universal Declaration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

A four-member team on behalf of the Committee for Initiative on Kashmir, during a visit to Jammu and Kashmir from March 12-16, obtained detailed information from a large number of sources including victims, eyewitnesses as well as senior government officials, about indiscriminate killings, arbitrary arrests, unlawful searches, unprovoked assaults on peaceful demonstrators and the complete dislocation of normal life due to imposition of indefinite curfew for months together. *The team found, in the course of investigation, that these abuses have been carried out by the official law enforcement personnel—the Central Reserve Police Force (CRPF), the Border Security Force (BSF), and in certain cases, by the*

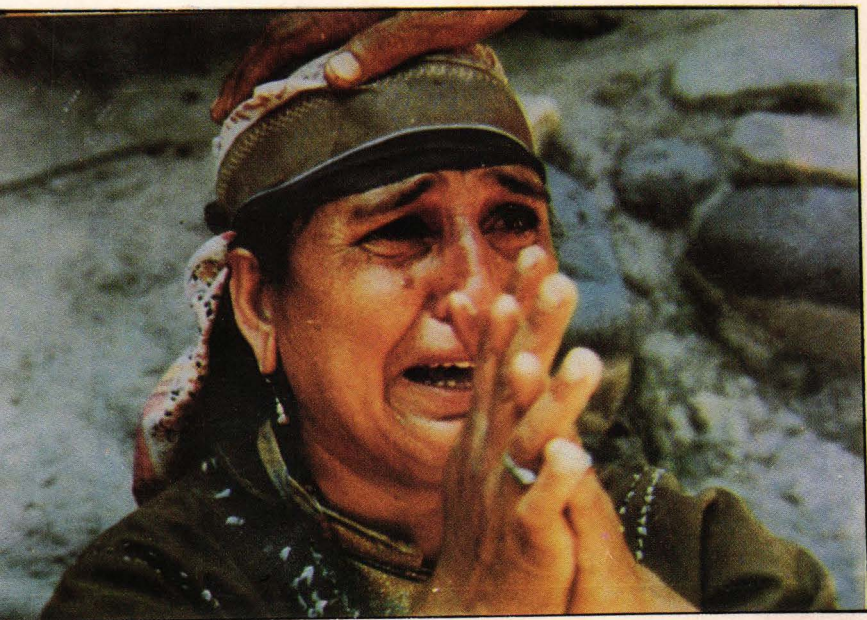
Indian army. That these cases of blatant violation of human rights were not isolated instances of aberrations but operative extensions of an official policy was evident to the team members when they met senior administrators who justified such actions on the ground that they were necessary to contain “terrorism”.

While the team condemns as a matter of principle any form of “terrorism” (in the sense of violence and intimidation by a handful of decision-makers—whether among the rulers or the forces of the opposition), it believes that such terror 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 paramilitary 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) indicate that they suffer from the paranoiac feeling that the entire population of the valley are pro-Pakistani “terrorists.” Dictated by such suspicions, operations to maintain law and order have invariably led to the alienation of the common people who are subjected to humiliation, discrimination and violence by security forces. As a result, ironically the government’s plan to suppress ‘terrorism’ is leading up to a situation where the hitherto non-committed masses are being pushed to a position where they feel that ‘independence’ from New Delhi—as demanded by the assortment of secessionist militant groups—is the only escape from state repression.



Grief



Helplessness

This feeling was eloquently summed up by a Kashmiri government officer: ‘Till January 19, I was against the militants. Today, I am for them.’

On January 21, a 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 Gow Kadal area, paramilitary forces started firing on them. According to 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, indicate not only the ruthlessness of the paramilitary forces but also their anti-Muslim bias. The survivor, Farooq Ahmed Wani, is an assistant executive engineer in the water supply department (public health engineering) of the J and K government. His experiences in his own words: “My house is in Rajbagh area. On the day of the incident I was told by a water-tanker driver that due to curfew water tankers were not being allowed to move about and reach 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 Jahangir 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 Gow Kadal. I joined

the women who were marching in the procession hoping that I would be safe in their company. As we were just about to cross the Gow Kadal 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 sometime. When I lifted my head I saw a paramilitary officer approaching. I saw him pumping bullets into the bodies of the injured who were lying on the road. A boy who was trying to hide under the platform of the bridge was killed. 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 Jammu and Kashmir Armed Police (JKAP) men came and watched me. They were however soon chased away by the paramilitary men. Another paramilitary officer moved up to me and shouted: *Tum sala zinda hai mara nahi hai?* (You are still alive not yet dead?) 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 came over and shouted at me: You are not yet dead? The other 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 me phak do* (Throw

away the rest into the 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 and put us in the ambulance and rushed us to the Bone and Joint Hospital. We later heard that the head-constable who saw us—the living piled up with the dead in the truck—had later suffered a heart attack.”

Farooq Ahmed Wani showed us his arms and back, where six bullets were pumped in. He has been released from hospital after operation. But there are other victims of the January 21 firing still recuperating in the Bone and Joint Hospital in Srinagar, whom we interviewed during our trip. Kasim 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 up for hours by 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 hospital.

Doctors at the Bone and Joint Hospital told us that they were getting 300 cases daily at the OPD after January 20, as against the earlier number of 30 per day. Najib, the 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. Victims of such bullet injuries were being brought to the hospital now. 'They are like war casualties', he said. 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 reach the hospital.

On March 7, following firing by militants on the CRPF at Chhanpora, the latter raided houses in the locality. We visited the area on March 14 and interviewed the victims—mainly women who were molested and raped by the paramilitary forces. Noora (24), wife of Abdul Rahman 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)—being molested by the CRPF. An elderly lady, Ayesha, wife of Samad Gani, told us that when the CRPF assaulted her son, the daughter-in-law Maymoona tried to rescue him. CRPF personnel knocked 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 area to escape humiliation by the CRPF personnel, who still came to the locality everyday to harass inhabitants. 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 Mohammad 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—coming out in processions on the streets. They were members of a women’s organization called *Dukhtaran-e Millat*, carrying banners demanding ‘independence’ and the withdrawal of Indian security forces from Kashmir. The immediate reason for their demonstration that day was to protest against 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 a nearby mosque. They were not spared by the CRPF jawans who entered the mosque, beat them up and smashed the furniture in the mosque. Incidentally, as the women were marching towards the UN office, we heard the police announcing over loudspeakers that curfew was being reimposed—even before it was due.

It is not peaceful demonstrators who are being attacked by the paramilitary forces. We found that even doctors going around in the normal course of their duties are not spared. During our visit to the Sher-e-Kashmir Institute of Medical Sciences on March 14, senior doctors narrated their experiences at the hands of the paramilitary 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 paramilitary forces who pointed guns at their heads.

Although they showed their curfew passes and identity cards, each 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 to escape humiliating body searches. Within the hospital complex doctors and attendants are searched everytime 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 Bones 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 paramilitary forces when outside. This perhaps explains why the staff in hospitals in the valley refuse to take patients from the Indian paramilitary forces.

Common patients suffer the most due to the harassment of the paramilitary forces. We were told about seriously ill people and pregnant women being turned back from the hospitals by the security forces who man the roads leading to the hospitals. The height of cruelty was demonstrated by the paramilitary 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 injured victims. All the four drivers who went to the spot came back as patients after having been severely beaten up by paramilitary forces who refused them permission to take the injured to 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.

The daily lot of the ordinary citizens of the valley—the raids and searches, the threat to their lives when they come out even when curfews is lifted—has hardened their attitude towards the Indian government in general and the paramilitary 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 hospital, who was stopped by the paramilitary forces and asked to go back. They were reported to have shouted at her: *Let the child die. There will be one militant less.*

Source: Tapan Bose, Dinesh Mohan
Gautam Navlakha, Sumanta Banerjee
(The Economic and Political Weekly: Bombay,
March 31, 1990)

Panel's concern over Kashmir

Sir: On March 24 Radio Kashmir in its English and Urdu news broadcasts questioned the authenticity of our report "India's Kashmir War". It was claimed that our report was based on accounts of those who "harbour" terrorists and was a distortion.

Three days later on March 27 a Co-ordination Committee of some social and religious organizations — which among others comprises BJP, RSS, VHP, Hindu Shiv Shakti Dal, etc. — issued a statement alleging that our report was based on “concocted stories” and was “an attempt to malign and demoralize the security forces.”

The statement also asked the state and central government to take note of the activities of “such doubtful characters” and demanded an inquiry against our committee. As it happens we were visited by a gentleman on March 27, who claimed to belong to J & K State intelligence department conducting a “routine inquiry” about the committee.

Since aspersion has been cast on our person, and accounts given in the report have been termed “concoction,” we request, through your columns, minister-in-charge for Jammu and Kashmir Mr. George Fernandes and Governor Jagmohan to institute a judicial inquiry by a person with impeccable judicial qualification such as Justice V. Krishna Lyer, Justice V.M. Tarkunde, etc. into the several incidents narrated in our report of indiscriminate killings of rape and molestation of women and other crimes committed by security forces against the people of Kashmir. We are perfectly willing to cooperate, submit affidavits, and defend our report in front of such an inquiry commission. The authenticity and veracity of our report can only thus be established. Character assassination, innuendos, and threats are only an attempt to malign and demoralize the Kashmir people and to totally erode their confidence in secular democracy enshrined in our Constitution. The law-enforcing machinery must be made accountable and answerable for transgression and punished

for violation of laws and norms of civilized behaviour. No matter what one's stance on Kashmir, the government of India cannot fight political battles by subjecting people to humiliation and brute force. That simply is our concern.

Suhasini Mulay
(Executive Secretary)
Committee for Initiative on Kashmir

Source: Suhasini Mulay
(The National Herald: April 09, 1990)

Kashmir under way

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. Along with 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.”

Source: Time Weekly
(The Nation: April 11, 1990)

How to save Kashmir

The militants are maintaining a photograph file of every man, woman or child killed by the police and the photos are passed from hand to hand. Many of these are in loving technicolour, showing ashen, lifeless faces with glazed eyes, sheets draped over the lower parts. The pictures are taken on medical trolleys, with flash bulbs, the heads lifted slightly by willing helpers to give the photographer the right angle—proof that the hospital staff are with the militants.

A video-film of a woman allegedly raped by the CRPF on March 8 at Chhanpora, a village just outside Srinagar, is circulating in the Valley, and creating instant coverts to terrorism. New *shaheedi* (martyrs) graveyards have been created in every locality, where militants and victims of police bullets are buried.

How has Kashmir gone from sullen acquiescence to full blown insurgency in such a short time? Everyone we met was unanimous in saying that it happened on January 21, when the police opened fire with automatic weapons on a procession of demonstrators in a narrow street in the Gowkadal 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, Gowkadal has become the Kashmiris' Jallianwala Bagh.

Source: Prem Shankar Jha
(The Sunday Observer: April 15, 1990)

New Delhi rejects calls to end curfew...

Authorities rejected calls on Monday to end a curfew in Kashmir that has confined millions of people indoors for 11 days without access to fresh food and medical care.

In Srinagar, the government closed two leading Urdu language newspapers and the newspapers of Jamaat-i Islami, a fundamentalist party with links to the Jamaat-i Islami in Pakistan.

Source: (The Herald Tribune: April 17, 1990)

Kashmiri families flee Harassment by troops

As well as increasing tension between Pakistan and India, Kashmir is now creating a refugee problem for Pakistan, which is already burdened by three million Afghan refugees.

Most are young men escaping army searches.

However, some families have fled from villages near the cease-fire line because of what they describe as constant harassment by Indian troops.

Thirty-six families fled the village of Kainthawali in northwest Indian Kashmir. They are now living in tents on a hillside near Muzaffarabad, the capital of Pakistan's Azad Kashmir.

The villagers said Indian soldiers demolished their houses, took their property and forced them to sit in freezing mountain streams for hours.

Source: Ian MacWilliam
(The Daily Telegraph: April 18, 1990)

Kashmir genocide aided by Western apathy

The BBC reported, April 12, that Indian paramilitary forces even blocked indigenous Kashmiri attempts to respond to

frantic calls for relief supplies from the food scarcity areas of old Srinagar city.

Even an Indian newspaper, *The Tribune*, warned as early as March 12 that “on account of prolonged curfew restrictions, starvation deaths in certain parts of the valley are not ruled out. Even if eatables and other consumer goods are available, most of the families will have no money to buy them.”

But a sharper rebuke has been administered by the *Patriot* of April 3, in an editorial headlined “Agony of Kashmir,” it says: “The near total breakdown reported in the supply of essential goods and services, including food, medicines and life-saving equipment and drugs in the Kashmir Valley (it must be stressed) is not just a phenomenon of the past two weeks—throughout the long bitter winter, and especially with the indefinite curfew imposed in towns, acute shortages of these items have been manifested at least since January. The people of the valley have to suffer the anguish of watching their loved ones, wounded in the crossfire between security forces and terrorists, die for lack of critical medicines, drugs and equipment even in the hospitals of Srinagar. Acute shortages of fuel, edible oils, food-grains and other essential goods, have turned life into a nightmare for months on end.”

VOA explained, April 13/14, that “the Kashmir Valley has been under curfew almost continuously since January. The people are angry not only at the shortage of food and other essential commodities but also at the emotional threat posed by the long house confinement, particularly during the Muslim holy month of Ramadan.” The VOA correspondent points

out that the Army has cordoned off the entire city, and due to fear, the people do not even look out of the windows. There are feelings of anger everywhere.

The Kashmiris are the angriest at the house-to-house searches which frequently result not only in destroying or looting of property and molestation of young women and brutalization of old men, but also torturing and abduction of so-called young militants. Where they end up has been described graphically this week by a human rights body in Washington which says: the youngmen are taken to the Kashmir Control Line and shot dead on the pretext they were trying to escape into Azad Kashmir to receive arms and training. The Washington report says, more than 750 Kashmiris arrested in Srinagar over five days have been shifted to Rajhistan desert where they are being tortured to death.

Mr. Dalesh Singh, a Minister in the Rajiv Gandhi cabinet, was quoted by VOA, April 12, as telling Lok Sabha that more than 700 people have been killed in Kashmir during the few months the new government has been in power in Delhi. The Amnesty International, in its January 22 and 30 telexes to Governor Jagmohan has complained of unarmed demonstrators being shot in the head or body or from behind by the Indian Central Reserve Police. However, the governor has been quoted by AIR, April 3, as pleading that nobody should find fault with the brave paramilitary forces in view of what he choose to call "unfavourable weather and topographical conditions."

It is this callous attitude of the Indian Administration that drove the Indian "Committee for Initiative on Kashmir"

to the conclusion that “these cases of blatant violations of human rights were not isolated instances of aberrations but an operative extensions of an official policy.”

The Committee, in its investigating report, released in New Delhi in March, has meticulously documented the details of the reign of terror, rape and carnage let loose in Indian-held Kashmir over the last three months or more; and most of the incidents listed check with the foreign correspondents despatches even as they took place, and also with the data since published by the Indian Press.

But the surprise is that the Western world has failed to react to such blatant abuse of human rights in Indian-held Kashmir. There has been no forthright condemnation of it by the UN secretary-general who is the custodian of human rights under the UN Charter, or by the UN Human Rights Commission in Geneva which has specifically been entrusted with the responsibility for monitoring human rights violations worldwide, or by any of the world powers who never tired of demonstrating their deep concern for human rights violations elsewhere—in Iran, USSR and China.

Source: Ghanie Eirabie
(The Nation: April 21, 1990)

News blockade in Kashmir

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 organizations including the Jammu and Kashmir Liberation Front.

“Imagine how humiliating it was to be clubbed with the secessionists”, said a veteran 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 materialized when two prominent 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 senior journalist and a Sahitya Akademi award winner who represents a number of Indian and foreign agencies: “When the national press chose to report on Kashmir on the basis of handouts issued from the Raj Bhavan in Jammu, the local journalists reported the atrocities being committed on Kashmiris with a vengeance and within days came the curbs on the press. You can’t call this a coincidence.”

Source: Aasha Khosa
(India Week: Bombay May 4, 1990)

Indian crackdown turns Kashmir into fortress

INDIA has gained the upper hand in the beleaguered Kashmir Valley after an aggressive two-month security operation by thousands of troops, police and paramilitary forces.

The valley is now a fortress, factories, schools, universities, banks and post offices are mostly closed. The police and paramilitary presence in Srinagar, the summer capital, is overwhelming. Between them, the security forces and at least 50 militant organizations have removed just about every semblance of normal life. In Srinagar, as in other towns, a shoot-on-sight curfew falls at 6 pm every day and remains in force for the next 15 hours — unless there is trouble, in which case it is extended.

India may have contained the secessionist challenge, but it has certainly not removed it. Only yesterday, Indian troops shot and killed nine suspected Muslim militants in gunfights on the border, with Pakistan, losing two men. And a general strike, called by the militant Jammu and Kashmir Liberation Front, crippled Srinagar and the rest of the valley.

Many people in the valley observe small personal acts of protest against India. They wear watches on the right wrist, for example, and set them half an hour back, to Pakistani time. This little badge of rebellion infuriates security forces, who demand to check people's watches at roadblocks. Shopkeepers in the grubby alleyways of bazaars like Badshah Chowk have erected signs in Urdu, instead of the usual English, painted on a background of green, the colour of militancy.

The police and military seem to be everywhere. There is a sandbag bunker on every corner in central Srinagar. Foot patrols move constantly through the streets. At night, military convoys rumble through the deserted city.

A curfew was imposed for 15 consecutive days and nights from April 6 to 21. It was a traumatic experience, recalled with great bitterness. Food almost ran out, and towards the end only rice and cereals were left in most households; pregnant women were known to have died for want of medical attention; there was no electricity; and every day the security forces fanned out into a new district, searching houses and taking away unknown numbers of young men.

Atrocities undoubtedly took place. The Central Police Reserve Force, a non-Kashmiri paramilitary body manned by Hindus and Sikhs, is despised and feared. Yet security officials in Delhi admit that they captured few militant leaders.

The circumstances under which people are held are not known. The International Committee of the Red Cross and the Delhi-based Civil Liberties Centre are not allowed to enter the valley. All terrorist trials are to be conducted more than 100 miles away in Jammu, the second city. Since Jammu is predominantly Hindu, it will be difficult for alleged subversives to find an acceptable lawyer.

The government has closed the valley's three local newspapers: *Aftab*, *Alsafa* and *Wadi ki Awaz*, all of them Urdu-language publications. In retaliation, militant organiza-

tions have banned the distribution of all outside newspapers, including the Jammu-based *Kashmir Times*, adding to the sense of isolation.

Censorship has been imposed without any official announcement. All items filed by a local Indian news agency reporter begin with reminder to his editors: "Subject to official clearance at Jammu."

All people killed by security forces have to be described as "militants". The reporter said: "I know many innocent people are killed, but I cannot say so. Nor can I write that the independence movement is supported by every single Muslim in the valley, which it is."

Almost all Hindus, previously about 4 per cent of the population, have left the valley and are housed in refugee centres in Jammu or Delhi. The Indian government attributes their flight to intimidation by secessionists. Local human rights activists, however, insist that the government encouraged the exodus to create the impression internationally that Hindus were under siege from Muslim fundamentalists.

Violence linked to the Muslim campaign for secession has left more than 460 people dead so far this year. According to a prominent lawyer in Srinagar, who is involved in human rights work, 2,000 people are held under emergency regulations, although it is impossible to substantiate the figure.

Last week, a Srinagar court that tries alleged subversives was closed, he believes, to prevent local Muslim

lawyers from defending suspects. “They will never get a fair trial in Jammu,” he added.

Source: Christopher Thomas
(The Times London: May 8, 1990)

The slaughters of Kashmiris

At one stage, in the month of April, 1990, the Kashmiri Muslims were under a continuously lingering curfew stretching for twelve days with not a break of even a single minute in the holy month of fasting and prayers (Ramadan).

Source: Syed Farooq Hasnat
(The Muslim: May 12, 1990)

Indian terror drive in Kashmir

Indian troops, depopulating villages in Kashmir state, are plundering houses and abusing women as part of a “terror drive” against Muslim freedom fighters, refugees fleeing across the border from Indian-held Kashmir said here.

Mariam Bibi, a woman in her mid-20’s who arrived here two weeks ago with her four children from Kantawali village in Kapwara district said Indian troops molested, pulled her hair and threatened to break her arms and legs before taking her to their post. They also threatened to hang her up

from the tree if she did not cooperate, she added.

Looking shocked, she said that while some Indian troops were dragging her away, others pounced on her with sticks and rifle butts.

“They behaved like starved animals,” the woman, now living in a camp run by the Kashmir Liberation Cell (KLC) under the Azad Kashmir government, said.

Explaining what she called the “agony of humiliation,” she said “they held me for four days.”

Asked why she became their target, she said, “The invading soldiers attacked my house when my husband was away. All the time they were asking me ‘handover your weapons.’ But I had none.”

The soldiers and officers conducting house-to-house searches “plundered the houses and made many of us hostage when the search yielded no arms,” she said.

“I was not allowed to sleep and my children were denied food”, she added.

“On my repeated pleas they allowed [me] to fetch food from my house four days later. But that too, on the condition that my young nephew would stay behind as a hostage to ensure that I would come back.”

As she did not go back she was told that they killed her nephew and tortured his father, making him stand for a whole

day in five-foot deep ice water to extract confessions and information on those fighting against the Indians, she said.

Another woman, Peerzadi was also raped along with her aunt in the same military post, friends said. She herself could say nothing but “I am afraid of the Kafirs (nonbelievers).

Mir Zaman, a middle aged man from the village located about 10 kilometers from the line of control dividing the predominantly Muslim state, said that in a surprise raid “the Indian troops descended on our village, beat up most of us while searching for the freedom fighters. They looted our things and abused our woman,” he said.

Source: (The Nation: May 13, 1990)

Sing a song of freedom

A retired civil servant tells how soldiers forces him to lick the symbol J.K.L.F., 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.”

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 honor ... among Muslims—and grilled him on his political beliefs. An old copy of foreign newsmagazine 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 beatings by soldiers. Says a senior local policeman: “The army was told to teach these people a lesson.”

Source: Edward W. Desmond
(Time Weekly: May 14, 1990)

Military crushes Kashmir faith in secularism

Kashmiri Moslems 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 Babboo 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 Khwaja 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 Mahdadar, released after 18 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.

Source: David Housego
(The Financial Times: May 15, 1990)

Indian governor resigns after Muslim killings

On Monday, the Jagmohan approach reached a new nadir of ruthlessness. A huge procession of Muslim mourners, following the body of their revered high priest, Mirwaiz Maulvi Farooq, was fired on without warning. At least 47 were killed and scores wounded.

Furious Srinagar residents believe the true death toll to be at least 100, and claim that the procession was deliberately ambushed. Other sources say that the security forces simply panicked.

Maulvi Farooq was assassinated by three unidentified gunmen earlier on Monday. The killing is almost universally

blamed in the Kashmir Valley on government agents, who executed the Maulvi for his uncompromising support for self determination.

Since Mr. Jagmohan's appointment in January, around 500 people have been killed in the Valley, many of them victims of unprovoked firing by the security forces.

Source: Derek Brown
(The Guardian: May 26, 1990)

Sullied bride seen as sacrifice for Kashmir

Mubina Ganie is eighteen, and her face is dark with suffering. On May 18, on the way from her wedding to her first night in her husband's home, she was shot and then gang-raped by Indian soldiers.

These are dreadful times in Kashmir. One of the loveliest places on earth is being daily tortured by secessionist violence, and by the ruthless counter-terrorism of Indian security forces. The people, whose sympathy is now wholly with the separatists, pour out tales of appalling brutality by the Indians. Many are more bloody than Mubina's, but none more shocking.

In the general hospital in Anantnag, 50 kilometers from the Kashmir capital, Srinagar, Mubina is squatting on a bed in a foetid general ward. Alongside is her husband, whom

she hardly knows. Without protest, she hobbles to the operating theater, where there is a measure of privacy. Her pain is beyond understanding. But as she softly speaks, the horror is almost unbearable.

After the wedding, she says through an interpreter, she got on to a bus with her husband and an aunt, to go to her new home. The aunt was a chaperone cum companion, in keeping with tradition.

The bus, which had 24 passengers and 2 crew, was stopped after a short distance by a contingent of the Central Reserve Police Force (CRPF). There was no curfew in that area, but they had carried passes, just in case. They were allowed to proceed.

Some distance further on, there was a second road block, this time manned by the Border Security Force (BSF).

“We started to get down but we were given no chance to show our passes. They opened fire without warning. They fired through the windows and from machine guns underneath their vehicle. We lay down under the seats and pretended to be dead. After the shooting, they came inside and started to beat everyone,” said Mubina.

One passenger was dead. Many others had bullet wounds, including Mubina and her husband, Abdul Rashid.

She went on: “All those who were not seriously wounded were told to stand in a row and ordered to raise their hands. The two ladies [Mubina and her aunt] were forcibly

separated and ordered into a field.”

While the bus was systematically looted -- the plunder included some 12,000 rupees (about £400) given to the newly weds — Mubina and her aunt were stripped of their jewellery. Mubina, in Anantnag hospital, points to her unadorned ears and hands in shame. Even her wedding ring is missing.

She went on: “In the field, the soldiers first took off their clothes. I don’t know how many there were. We were crying bitterly. I told them that I had not yet seen my husband. But they didn’t listen. They took off our clothes. They bit my chest, and then I was raped. Four to six persons raped me, I think.”

Mubina’s aunt is between 40 and 45 years old. She was around seven months pregnant. Two days after being brought to the hospital, she left and has now disappeared without trace.

Source: Derek Brown
(The Guardian: May 26, 1990)

Chaos in the killing fields of Kashmir

The Mirwaiz (high priest) was shot by three unidentified gunmen. The government says they were fundamentalists, expressing displeasure at his insistence on a political settlement of the crisis. Everyone else here believes he was killed by agents of the hated former governor, Jagmohan.

Within hours of the murder, a huge crowd converged on the Medical Institute, seized the dead leader's body and set off towards his city-centre headquarters. After about three kilometers, the procession numbered around 100,000 grief-stricken people. The universal evidence of survivors is that they were chanting Koranic verses, and that there was not a militant among them.

The procession was eventually confronted by a road-block of paramilitary police. A small group went forward to negotiate. An officer drew his pistol and fired. All hell broke out.

Firing from close range, with small arms and automatic weapons from two sides, the police killed at least 47 people and wounded scores more. Unofficial estimates of deaths start at 80 and go up to 300. And those are the figures which are believed.

Source: Derek Brown
(The Guardian: May 28, 1990)

Kashmiri villagers tell of torture by Indian troops

The men of Haihama-Payerpora, a picturesque farming community of some 1,000 souls on the rim of the Kashmir Valley, filed into the parlour of their *Sarpanch*, or headman, Rustam Ali Khan, and sat cross-legged around the walls. Some had difficulty in walking, and one had clearly lost his senses. They

had returned the day before from 15 days in Indian army detention.

One by one they lifted their clothes to show massive bruises, burns from electrodes and heated rods cuts and rope sores. Their torture seems limited only by the ingenuity of their captors — one man, whose feet were bandaged up to the ankles, said a bed of coal had been covered with corrugated iron and a deep layer of sand, which slowed their progress when the prisoners were forced to run across it.

One morning in mid-May the troops arrived at the village in force. They seized Mr. Khan, a 75-year-old Indian army veteran, and administered electric shocks to him and his wife's brother. In all 15 men were taken, but only 14 came back. Mr. Khan's brother-in-law, Altaf Aly, was beaten to death in custody.

The group, a mixture of village elders and younger men who might be tempted to support the militant, was held for eight days at a military barracks in Kupwara town, then taken 50 miles to a large camp near the airport at Srinagar, the capital of Indian Kashmir. For the whole time they were bound and blindfolded; many who contracted dysentery from the dirty water had to be dragged to the latrines. They were released at Kupwara, without shoes for the three-mile walk home.

“We were never charged,” said Mr. Khan. “The soldiers simply told us that if we didn't stop supporting the militants, we would get more of the same. They also warned us to stay away from the mosque.”

Life back in the village was scarcely any better. The army had cut off their drinking water, and women were molested if they went to the stream. The villagers were not allowed to tend their rice paddies, which need a great deal of attention during the planting season, government distribution of essential supplies was stopped and even burials were prevented. “If this goes on, we’ll have to leave,” said the headman. “We complained to the local administrator, but he said he could do nothing. He is afraid of the troops.”

In Kupwara, it is hard to escape the conclusion that the security forces, who are overwhelmingly Indian and Sikhs, see it as their duty to beat an alien population into submission.

We had gone to the district to look for the home village of refugees encountered in Pakistani Kashmir a few days earlier. They had told appalling stories of rape, robberies and young men being shot. When we stopped in Kupwara to ask directions, it turned out that the village was in the three-mile wide military zone along the ceasefire line, but there were plenty of similar accounts closer to home.

Mr. Khan insisted that he and his village should be named—others were less brave. As we drove through a forest settlement a few miles away, weeping villagers brought out an unconscious man. All his knuckles were badly burnt. The army and the Security Force had camped there for four days, during which time the 30-year-old man, Abdul, had been subjected to repeated electric shocks. The security forces would not let them take him to hospital, people said. The last time a doctor had tried to come to the area, he was beaten up. At this point an old man rushed out to shoo the villagers back

to their homes, shouting: “We don’t want any more trouble here.”

Everyone else was only too eager to air complaints of harassment, threats of rape, of a 16-year-old girl led away and never seen again, of a man taken from his plough and beaten to death. One village school had 400 pupils on roll, but only 20 had turned up that day. Parents were keeping children at home for fear of the army, according to the teachers.

The inhabitants of Kupwara towns said 14 unidentified men had been buried in the local cemetery since the beginning of the year. They had been dumped in various parts of the district, their faces burnt with acid to make them unrecognisable. “You must tell people what is happening here,” said one man.

Source: Raymond Whitaker in Kupwara
(The Independent: June 06, 1990)

‘Kashmiris living in virtual prison in held valley’

People in the occupied Kashmir Valley are living in a virtual prison, starved of food and medicine and brutalized by Indian security forces, said doctors and human-rights advocates on Monday.

“Life for Kashmiris now is like that of prisoners”, said former chief justice Mufti Bahauddin Farooqi in an interview at his home.

The softly spoken Farooqi, 62, is chairman of the Jammu and Kashmir people's basic rights protection committee.

His group filed 40 charges last week in the state high court, formerly headed by Farooqi, alleging a "reign of terror" by Indian security forces, mass killings, rape, illegal arrest, torture of detainees and thefts during house-to-house searches.

The group says curfews and "indiscriminate firing have brought business to a grinding halt ... in a deliberate economic stranglehold by the government."

Source: Reuter
(The Frontier Post: June 27, 1990)

President's rule in Valley from July 19

Mr. Saxena followed up his Thursday order, which gave sweeping powers to security officials to crush Muslim freedom fighters, by handing over the control of the disturbed areas to the army through a new proclamation on Friday.

He endorsed a new Armed Forces (Jammu and Kashmir) Special Power Ordinance, which specifically directed army, paramilitary and police forces "to carry out searches and destroy hideouts of elements indulging in subversions."

The designation of the Muslim dominated valley as a disturbed area vested extraordinary powers in officials, in-

cluding arrests and searches without warrants, and press curbs if necessary.

It authorises a middle-ranking police officer to open fire and the “use of force even to the extent of causing death,” without permission from higher authorities.

Source: AFP
(The Nation: July 08, 1990)

22 killed, 200 houses gutted in Kashmir

Twenty-two people were killed and nearly 200 houses gutted in a series of fires that swept through Indian-held Kashmir, reports said on Monday.

Indian news agencies said the incidents occurred on Sunday in areas in and around Srinagar city, capital of occupied Kashmir.

Four people were burned to death and more than 1,000 rendered homeless when a fire broke out on Sunday in two villages in Badgam district after an exchange of fire between the Kashmiri freedom fighters and security forces.

The United News of India (UNI) said officials recovered four bodies including one with bullet wounds, during fire control operations. The news agency said the cause of the fire was under investigation.

Meanwhile the UNI reported a women's college and three hotels were set ablaze in Srinagar city. There was no immediate report of loss of life as all the hotels were unoccupied.

Source: Reuter
(The Muslim: July 10, 1990)

WKFM Chief speaks of Indian atrocities...

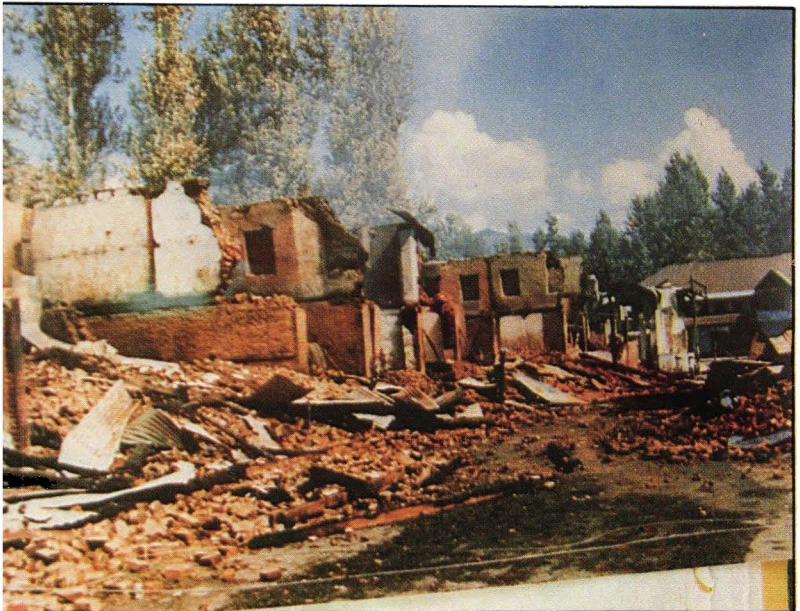
Since the start of the current uprising in the Indian-held Kashmir, more than 3000 innocent Kashmiris have been killed and over 10,000 mostly young men and women imprisoned by the Indian occupation forces. From among them, about 1000 have been kept in torture cells.

This information was provided by Dr. Ayub Thukar, president of the newly formed World Kashmir Freedom Movement (WKFM) and chairman of International Institute of Kashmir Studies in London, while addressing a press conference here on Wednesday.

He said much inhumanity, continuous violation of basic rights, frequent massacre, constant fear, hunger and misery were the gifts Indian occupation forces were bringing to Kashmir. He said that some of the actions of the Indian authorities were reported by the world media, but later India clamped strict censorship on the news and barred the entry of all foreign reporters into the occupied area. The only press



Let them burn.



Why let them live!

despatches India allowed were those filed by Indian correspondents after officials briefings. He said at present whole Kashmir was handed over to the army who raided houses to extort information about the uprising without warning. They raped several women, including a young bride on her wedding day, he added.

Furthermore, a practice maintained by the Indian troops was that of dumping in government warehouses the bodies of those killed and handing them over to the near ones at night with strict orders to arrange burials in the dark. In one instance, Indian soldiers killed 25 Kashmiri freedom fighters and tried to destroy the evidence by throwing the bodies into the river. However, later the people recovered 15 bodies.

The Indian troops have totally burnt Magam village, Gul Mark road district to Srinagar and the Bungus valley have also been changed into ashes, he said. Indian propaganda has helped in confusing the issue, he added.

Source: Dr. Ayub Thukar
World Kashmir Freedom Movement
(The Frontier Post: July 12, 1990)

135 muslim officials dismissed

Meanwhile, Indian government has dismissed 135 high-ranking Muslim officials from their posts in Jammu and Kashmir state. According to the Press reports here, these officials were accused of collaborating with Kashmiri freedom fighters.

The Indian government has appointed non-Muslims on the posts of dismissed Muslim officials.

Source: AFP
(The Nation: July 14, 1990)

India violating human rights in Kashmir

US Senator Alan Cranston said on Friday he was convinced that Indian security forces were committing human rights violations in Occupied Kashmir and called for putting an end to them, reports APP.

“The refugees, who were being held in two separate camps, offered a convincing view of Indian security force misconduct”, the Senator told the Senate.

“I heard stories of old people being summarily executed, of women being held for days at security force encampments where they were repeatedly raped, and children who were forced to watch the brutalisation of their parents, or who were themselves tortured.”

Source: APP
(The Nation: July 15, 1990)

Indians kill 4 more Kashmiris

A convoy of the security forces was passing through a road blocked by cattles in Baramulla. The soldiers exchanged hot words with the shepherd driving the cattles after which they opened indiscriminate fire on people gathered around them. Four persons were killed as a result of firing and security forces clamped indefinite curfew on Baramulla.

Strict curfew is still continuing in Srinagar and other parts of the held valley to prevent rallies and demonstrations called by Kashmiri leaders.

Source: BBC
(Dawn: July 15, 1990)

Kashmir bleeding

He [a Kashmiri refugee] reports that the Indian troops have lost all their balance of mind. It is incorrect to call them Security Forces, actually it is the Indian army which is being used to crush the innocent and peace-loving people of Occupied Kashmir. Even their trucks are mud plastered to hide the number and identity of the army unit it belongs to.

Quoting the figures with a high degree of reliability, he said that over ten-thousand people have so far been martyred, about twenty-three thousand are rotting in jails, over twenty thousand have been seriously injured and crippled, three thousand and five hundred teenage girls have been taken away

from the processions of Dukhtaran-e Kashmir. Not satisfied with all this they have now called advisers from Israel who are camping near Chasma Shahi, in the neighbour hood of Nishat Bagh.

He said that the dead are not being allowed to be picked up for burial, as they reopen fire on those who try to take them away. Indian troops collect them in the trucks and burn them en-masse. Some they throw in the River Jhelum. This they do to ensure that there is no record left of the dead in the present struggle. Some details of harassment, torture and inhuman behaviour of Indian troops are:

- a) Indian troops burst into homes at any time of the day or night, ostensibly in pursuit of “mujahideen,” with guns pointing three abreast, two soldiers covering the flanks on both sides and one in the centre advancing ahead. They come in groups of nine and twelve. During the search, they take away most of the food items like rice, sugar, dried vegetables, oil, salt, charcoal and firewood. Some they burn in the house itself.
- b) During house searches, indian troops look particularly for the Holy Qur'an which is available in every house. They throw it on the ground and ask the inmates to trample on it. People who refuse to do so are beaten up severely. Then they ask to ... which cannot be put in writing as it would be blasphemy. Since the people refuse to desecrate the Qur'an, they are shot dead or injured.

- c) During searches, they ask men to stand on one side and women and girls on the other. After surveying the house thoroughly they tie the men with ropes and rape the girls in groups in front of their fathers, brothers or husbands. The cries of frightened children and women are heard in the neighbourhood.
- d) Of late they have started breaking the bones of young men. Any young man, a teenager walking peacefully on the road is caught by two persons in civil clothes. They are Indian Army Commandos who simultaneously catch his arms and break his wrist bones. The unfortunate person thus caught is left in agony on the street. This operation does not take more than a couple of minutes. Any person who tries to run away is shot at.
- e) Women who come out in processions violating the curfew are beaten and fired upon. The young and teen age girls in the procession are taken away in trucks. So far 3500 girls have been picked up and their whereabouts are not known.
- f) Hindus are sent to Occupied Kashmir to impersonate as Muslims. The reporter says that once he was offering prayers in the mosque when he observed an unknown person making some strange movements which disclosed his ignorance about [the prayers]. He became suspicious and kept an eye on him. The man's sleeve was unbuttoned and he read Om Prakash written on his right arm.

- g) During the month of Ramadan, Indian troops used to get hold of elderly men and women and ask them to lick the dirty water of drains.

Source: Wing Commander G.M. Khan
(The Muslim: July 18, 1990)

Women main target of Indian atrocities

An independent human rights group Thursday accused the Indian government of abusing power and using violence in occupied Kashmir, and stressed that women are the main victims of violence by the security forces there.

A report published here by the group of four women after a week's investigation in June in Srinagar valley, the centre of the anti-Indian campaign in the province, documents many detailed examples of violence and rape carried out by the Indian security forces.

“We found to our distress that women had become particular targets of the security forces. The methods and manners of attack on women had a definite pattern,” the report states.

The report charges that the government has issued secret instructions that give security forces broad powers. It says the army has been “asked to do the work of the police, but without any civilian authority to check the possible abuses of

these vast powers by the security forces.”

Since January, it says, even lower grade paramilitary troops “are authorised to break open doors and windows and enter “zenana” (women’s quarters in houses) and make arrests without any warrant.”

Before February, a male member of the household would be present during any search of the women’s rooms, but now “the male members are made to leave the house and the women are locked inside the house.”

The report’s authors produced an earlier document in March on human rights abuses in Indian held-Kashmir. They say the situation has worsened since then.

They warn that if such abuses of power continue, “there will be no possibility of arriving at a real solution to the problem” of Kashmir.

Life in Kashmir has virtually come to a standstill and nobody’s life is secure. The report says what is most disturbing is that women have now become a primary target of attack.

The team met a number of women. Among them there is not a single woman who was not molested in such operations. Rifle butts were put in their mouths and they were even subjected to electric shocks. According to the report, this pattern was repeated again and again in Batmallo, Kupwara, Panzgam and Baramula.

The members of the team firmly believe that this has the sanction of the higher authorities.

The report says: “In the eyes of security forces every Kashmiri is an enemy. They threaten to kill four of them for every one of us killed. They display an open communal bias in their dealings and use third degree methods of torture”.

The members of the team in their report said: “We believe that desire for ‘azadi’ by Kashmiris is no longer an expression of protest but a desire to chalk out their own future.”

The team of the Initiative Committee consisted of Premila Lewis, a journalist, Mandita Haksar, an advocate, Suhasini Mulay, a film-maker, and Sakina Hasan, a former principal of a Srinagar college.

Source: AFP - APP
(The Muslim: July 21, 1990)

Human rights violations turn Kashmiris against New Delhi

A string of massacres and human rights violations by Indian security forces has turned the Muslim-majority population of Kashmir against the central government in New Delhi.

The murder here on Monday of 15 Kashmiri civilians by Indian troops was the latest in a long list of atrocities.

"We were sitting (when) all of a sudden military forces broke into the 'house", said a teenager in the Hawal neighbourhood of Srinagar, the summer capital of Jammu and Kashmir state.

"My mother tried to stop them but she was overpowered," she said. "They went upstairs, without a word, they shot my father, my two brothers, and left."

Blood-spattered walls and bedding bore witness to the night-time attack.

In two neighbour houses, at least 6 other people were killed within the space of 15 minutes as they ate their evening meal or slept.

None of the residents of Hawal could explain the military action in their neighbourhood, already paralysed by an around-the-clock curfew.

Residents and police said in all 15 civilians were killed Monday night, bringing to at least 1,060 the number of people killed in seven months of armed struggle by freedom fighters in India's only Muslim-majority state.

On Tuesday morning, some 5,000 people defied the curfew in effect in most of this city of 800,000 to take part in the funeral for nine of the dead.

"This sort of thing can only turn even the moderate members of (Srinagari) society against India," commented a local businessman.

The executive committee of the Jammu and Kashmir High Court Bar Association, in a report released on Tuesday, accused the Indian army and paramilitary forces of mass murder and repeated human rights violations in the form of rape, torture and arbitrary arrests.

"It called on the international community to cease being "silent spectators" to the rise of what it called "the law of the jungle" in Kashmir.

Source: AFP
(The Frontier Post: August 09, 1990)

13 die as sleeping Kashmiris sprayed with bullets

Indian paramilitary soldiers sprayed gunfire on sleeping Muslim civilian in Srinagar and set two houses on fire, killing a total of 13 people and wounding 16, the Press Trust of India reported on Tuesday.

Border Security Force (BSF) men on internal security duties burst into several downtown houses in Srinagar late on Monday and opened fire from rifles, the agency quoted unnamed police sources as saying.

Eight adults and 3 children sleeping in the houses were killed in the midnight raid which left 16 other injured, 9 critically, it said.

The troops later set two houses in the overcrowded Hawal residential area on fire and prevented fire fighters from putting off the blaze, PTI said, adding that two more people died in the fire. What provoked the security men was not immediately [known].

Source: PTI
(The Frontier Post: August 09, 1990)

Kashmir uprising: a tale of woes

Permina Gul, a Kashmiri refugee who has fled her home in Held Kashmir, is wailing: "I have lost my home. I have lost my daughter." She says that during the last three months thousands of people have been killed and several students, doctors, lawyers, teachers and peasants put behind bars. Almost the entire Valley of Kashmir is under curfew.

She says: "Unwarranted house searches of midnight, the misbehaviour of Indian soldiers with women and the arrests of youngsters are the main reasons for forcing families in Srinagar and Baramulla to cross the borders."

Permina Gul says in a choked voice: "I travelled for two days and three nights along with my beautiful teenaged daughter, Mehrow Gul, and two years old son over snow-clad mountains to cross over the border. One night an Indian soldier raped my innocent pretty daughter, Mehrow Gul, who later committed suicide by drowning herself in the furious waves of river."

Again Permina cries: “What am I going to do! No-body has ever seen such a sexual harassment of women.”

Source: (The Nation: August 17, 1990)

Rape of Kashmiri women

Mark Tully of the BBC is the latest to record the sufferings of the Kashmiri people at the hands of the Indian security forces. His Wednesday's despatch, broadcast by the BBC in its programme *Assignment*, is the first really effective account of the revenge killing of innocent people and punitive burning of their homes. What comes out as the most chilling aspect of his reportage is the dishonouring of the Kashmiri women. Gang-rape of Kashmiri women, including women in advanced states of pregnancy and girls barely ten years old, is widespread. And it is being inflicted on a scale that could compare with the pain and destruction wrought by the Mongol hordes in history. The Indian government has shed all scruples; it has brought in Dogra troops to suppress the uprising among the Kashmiri Muslim. The rape is a Dogra speciality.

Source: BBC
(The Frontier Post: August 24, 1990)

Kashmir reign of terror by Indian troops

Impoverished villages like Diver, deep in the Kashmir mountains, have suffered brutal treatment at the hands of soldiers and paramilitary forces. Hundreds of men from the Border Security Force (BSF) swarmed into this peasant farming community at 4:00 a.m. on Friday and took 32 young men to an unknown destination for interrogation. Two youths were shot dead in the dusty main street during the round-up and many men were beaten unconscious with rifle butts and *lathis* (bamboo clubs).

The elderly village barber, his body a mass of vivid bruises and lacerations, is unable to walk. In the centre of the village the charred remains of large numbers of houses are a reminder of the last time security forces vented their anger on Diver, earlier this summer. The burning of house and shops is an increasingly common tactic. Villagers throughout rural Kashmir say that large numbers of young men are constantly carted away by security forces for questioning.

In the small town of Kupwara, known for its staunch support for the militant uprising, a young man showed wounds that he said were inflicted during an 18-day detention in which electric shocks were administered. "Eventually I was blind-folded and driven in an army lorry for a very long time, and then thrown out into the road," he said. "I made my way home by bus."

Security forces have mounted reprisals against entire villages. Adina, population 2,000, was besieged by Central

Reserve Police Force (CRPF) men after an attack by militants in the area on July 8, in which ten policemen were injured. The burnt remains of 126 houses, 100 cattle sheds and dozens of paddy store-houses bear witness to what happened. Villagers watched from a distance as their homes were torched. “Everything is gone — our houses, clothes food stocks and bicycles,” a man said, amid the blackened rubble where his home stood. Many cattle also perished in the blaze. Several people said that on the same day, in the neighboring village of Watmagam, a man was shot in the legs by members of the CRTS, covered with hay and burned alive.

Life in rural Kashmir is dominated by the security forces, who man hundreds of checkpoints and have been given unfettered powers of arrest. There are 350,000 security forces throughout the state. In towns, too, movements are severely restricted by paramilitary police. Srinagar, the valley’s capital, is under curfew every night from 6:30. Large number of colleges and almost all hotels have been commandeered to provide barracks for the vast number of security forces patrolling the city.

Girish Saxena, appointed a few months ago as governor of the state of Jammu and Kashmir, promised to ensure greater discipline by security forces after receiving complaints of atrocities. But at the same time he granted extensive new powers of arrest and search without warrant. He also authorized use of lethal force and destruction of property to maintain order. This has provided a legal basis for reprisals and beatings making it impossible for people to seek legal redress—even if there was a functioning judiciary in the Kashmir valley.

Senior Indian officials admit privately that the CRTS and Border Security Force has sometimes run amok, raping young women and beating men while senior officers looked on. Families have been ordered to strip naked in front of each other in order to humiliate them, human rights workers say. The Border Security Force is said to have used brutal tactics when it was given the task of forcing peasant families and nomadic farmers to leave the border region, which has been turned into a shoot-on-sight security corridor more than two miles wide. ... The rape of Muslim women by the predominantly Hindu security forces is so endemic that it appears to be part of a calculated strategy. Mufti Bahaud-din Farooqi, former chief justice of Jammu and Kashmir, said rapes were designed to terrorize the population into submission, because of the stunning impact of such violations on Muslims.

His son Mufti Showkat Ahmed Farooqi, an advocate at the near-defunct Srinagar High Court, said that 3,000 *habeas corpus* petitions were pending in Srinagar, but that the judicial system had virtually collapsed. He believed that many thousands of people were in detention, although no accurate figures were available. He added that rapes, more than any other atrocities, had embittered the valley. "The abuse of women has created an enormous backlash of anger towards India," he said. "There can be no going back now. Kashmir has reached the point of no return. People are more determined than ever to fight for self-determination."

Source: Christopher Thomas, AFP
(September 03, 1990)

9 Killed as strike cripples Kashmir

Kashmiris observed a general strike on Monday in sympathy with government employees who went on strike to force the reinstatement of colleagues sacked for alleged involvement with Muslim militants.

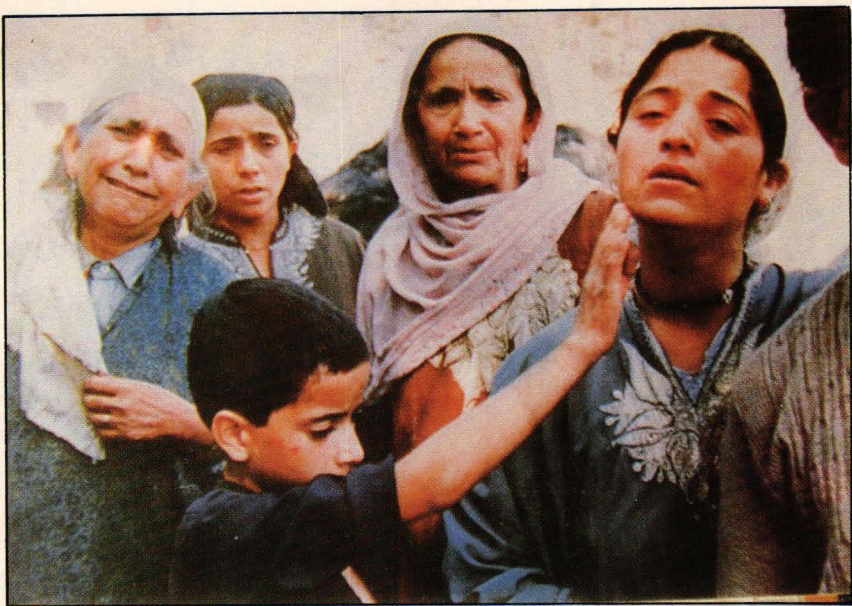
Shops and businesses, hotels and restaurants were shut, and transport stayed off the roads all over the strife-torn occupied Kashmir valley.

The strike silenced the valley as some 200,000 government employees began a five-day work boycott to force the reinstatement of their dismissed colleagues and press for a halt to persecution of Muslims by security forces.

Source: AFP
(The Frontier Post: September 04, 1990)

Congressional testimony of Dr. Ghulam Nabi Fai before Congressional Human Rights Caucus

Since the beginning of this year India has enacted a massive and violent crackdown against the people of Kashmir. The Indian occupation forces had used brutal force against Kashmiris repeatedly in 1953-4 and 1964-5, but never in as systematic a fashion and to the tremendous extent that they have during the past year.



A common bond of shame and suffering.



Holocaust revisited

Senator Alan Cranston recently reported to his colleagues in the Senate on his visit to Azad Kashmir's refugee camps. In that statement, Senator Cranston stated that "the refugees ... offered a convincing view of Indian security force misconduct. I heard stories of people being summarily executed, of women being held for days at security force encampments where they were repeatedly raped, and children who were forced to watch the brutalization of their parents, or who were themselves tortured."

It is estimated that since January of 1990 approximately 1200 people have died in Kashmir at the hands of the Indian forces of occupation — a figure admitted to by the government of India.

Further, it is estimated that over ten times this number of Kashmiris are held as political prisoners by the government of India. In a speech on the floor of the house of commons on July 23, 1990, after this recent trip to Azad Kashmir, Mr. Max Madden, a member of the British parliament, estimated that there were between 10,000 and 15,000 such detainees and that many were being subjected to torture on a regular basis. Similar numbers were also reported by the *New York Times* on June 15, 1990, which estimated 11,000 to 15,000 prisoners detained by the Indian army.

Mr. Madden further estimated that the total number of people either killed, detained, tortured, raped or in some other way abused by the Indian forces in Kashmir was, at a minimum, 150,000 people and that some estimates went as high as 500,000.

Recent reports from many sources show that the Indians have begun to burn Kashmiri villages to the ground, displacing families and often entire communities. According to testimony given by congressman Eni Faleomavaega at a recent joint hearing of the house subcommittee on Asian and Pacific affairs and the house subcommittee on human rights, this “scorched-earth” policy has become the modus operandi of the Indian security forces in Kashmir.

In his July 18, 1990 testimony, the congressman stated that “just two weeks ago the CRPF burnt down four villages. ... as a result of the arson committed by the CRPF twelve people died, scores were injured, and 5,000 people are now homeless. It is now evident that prime minister Singh is following a policy of systematic destruction by fire in order to leave a charred and battered land for the Kashmiris to rebuild.

Recently, I have begun to receive more and more reports of cases in which the Indian forces have actually locked families in their homes and then set them ablaze so that the occupants would die slow, painful deaths by fire and asphyxiation. Just one example. An article in the newspaper *India-West* September 14, 1990 documents one such case: On July 8, 1990, in the village of Kagh Magam, it reports that 20 people were locked in a building which was set ablaze by the Indian forces.

I do not think it an exaggeration to say that the Indians have begun to use cremation as a technique in what we fear may be their “final solution” to the Kashmir problem. There is no justifiable military purpose for the premeditated cremation of entire families. These are not tactics aimed at “mili-

tants.” These are tactics unseen since the Nazi holocaust and the Stalinist purges — tactics meant only to terrorize the people of Kashmir.

And thus the Indian army has been conducting house-to-house searches, during which they beat up the elderly, young boys, and rape Kashmiri women. A report issued just this month by the Jammu and Kashmir High Court Bar Association of Srinagar, chaired by the retired chief justice of the Kashmir High Court, documents many of these types of searches and rapes. I have supplied the committee with copies of this report. For example, on May 17, 1990 in the village of Badasgam at 11:30 p.m., a bride and bridesmaid were gang-raped by an Indian [patrol] when the bus carrying their wedding party was stopped and searched. The bride was taken away by the Indians and was only released after 48 devastating hours in their custody. In Panzgam, on July 16, 1990 at 7:00 p.m. an 18-year-old unmarried girl was gang-raped by army personnel, as male family members were tied to trees and forced to watch.

Personally, I know of many families who have been victims of illegal searches by the Indian army, whose daughters have been victims of such abuse. I know of friends whose daughters, some as young as twelve and thirteen, have been sexually molested by the Indian forces during these searches.

A March 1990 report by the Committee for Initiative on Kashmir, a group of Hindu lawyers from new Delhi, documents how doctors have been harassed for providing care to those injured by the Indian forces. They wrote, “We found that even doctors, going around in the normal course of their

duties, were not spared.” Doctors, the report states, are regularly stopped on the way in and out of hospitals, by Indian security forces, their medical supplies ruined or confiscated. On January 22, 1990, the report states that doctors from the Institute for Medical Studies in Srinagar sent four ambulances to the scene of one of the largest massacres in Kashmir this year. However, “all four drivers who went to the spot came back as patients after having been severely beaten up by the paramilitary forces who refused to let them take injured people to the hospitals.”

An article in the *New York Times* of July 15, 1990 quotes a Kashmiri doctor who describes how the Indian “security forces have entered hospitals, beaten patients, hit doctors, entered operating theaters, smashed instruments. Ambulance crews have been attacked, curfew passes confiscated. A number of people have died, unable to reach hospitals.”

The denial or disruption of medical care to anyone is inhuman. And there is absolutely no military purpose for it. And yet the Indian forces of occupation use this tactic on a daily basis in their campaign against the people of Kashmir.

The regular use of torture by Indian occupying forces is a fact of life in Kashmir today. Indian forces, under the current law, can pick up anyone they please, hold them without charge or due process. As stated earlier, tens of thousands of innocent Kashmiris are held as political prisoners and subjected to brutal torture at the hands of the Indian army. In a *New York Times* story, reporter Barbara Crosette writes of a Kashmiri police constable, Hanif Ahmad, who was picked

up by the Indian forces. They subjected him to electric shocks, and burned his back and thighs with hot irons. When he asked for water, they threw petrol mixed with chilis on his wounds. Four days later they had a driver throw him on the side of a road and ran over his body. Amazingly, he survived and was saved by a nearby shopkeeper.

In its report, the Jammu and Kashmir High Court Bar Association describes other torture tactics in detail:

- “1. The detainees are made to lick semen.
2. Heavy weight is tied with the private parts of the detainees and they are asked to stay standing in that position for hours. They are forced to drink large quantities of water so that the bladder fills up, and since the wither is tied, they cannot pass urine and have to suffer.
3. The legs of the detainees are stretched 180 degrees.
4. The detainees are compelled in indulging in homosexual activities. All this is done after the detainees are asked to recite the Holy Qur'an.”

In addition to this, forms of torture such as deprivation of food, water, sleep and so forth are the norm for India's Kashmiri political prisoners.

Not only has India embarked on a vicious campaign of terror in Kashmir, they have recently made moves to legalize their tactics. Defying the International Standards for Human

Rights, India is flying in the face of decency and actually codifying its terror tactics in Kashmir.

On July 19, 1990 New Delhi imposed “President’s Rule” in Kashmir, which allows the central government to rule the area by decree. The Indian governor G. V. Saxena declared Kashmir a “disturbed area,” and imposed the “Kashmir Armed Forces Special Powers Ordinance” giving the Indian army virtually free reign to terrorize the Kashmir people.

Source: Kashmiri American Council
“Indian Human Rights Violations in Kashmir,”
(September 25, 1990)

Special Report: protectors or predators

More than anywhere else, the number of atrocities have reached alarming proportions in army-infested Kupwara, a thickly forested, mountainous district 90 kilometers north of Srinagar, earlier famed only for the beauty of its Lolab valley. Young girls in the scenic Treggham village (the hometown of Maqbool Bhatt, founder of the Jammu and Kashmir Liberation Front) were 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 mi-

grated to a remote village and have just returned to their homes after four months.

Twenty-five kilometers from the Indo-Pak border is idyllic Ballipora, far removed from civilization. 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 neighboring 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 women, 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 fields, 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 *salwar* later set on fire by the jawans. Twenty-six-year-old Saba, 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 when, 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 *salwar*. "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 palpitations. In 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 lots 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 has 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 room, breast-feeding her 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 crossfiring 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 knowcked 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, a resident of Shali Bhata 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.

The people of Wadwan, a picture-book village in Badgam district, 20 kilometers from Srinagar, have a similar tale to tell. A convoy of 100 army vehicles drew in at dawn and wreaked 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 D.L. Trisal, district commissioner of Badga, "I received some complaints that women has 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 commissioner, I should get feedback from the police. But all communication between us has been paralyzed."

Source: Sukhmani Singh
(The Illustrated Weekly of India: September 30, 1990)

BSF rampage to take revenge

In a worst act of revenge, rampage the security forces razed the whole town of Handwara in northwest Kashmir to ashes by torching residential houses and shops yesterday. Curfew was clamped on the town today.

Apart from setting ablaze houses and shops, the forces fired indiscriminately killing as many as 20 people. The toll could be much higher, a senior official said, adding many buildings were still burning and “we do not know how many bodies are still under the debris.”

The Border Security Force jawans allegedly set 412 houses and seven vehicles on fire to take revenge for gunning down of a colleague by Kashmiri insurgents.

Two police constables, Mr. Shabbir Ahmed and Mr. Gulam Muhammad, posted at the local telephone exchange said they were witness to the security forces setting houses and shops ablaze using gunpowder and petrol. A police head constable, Ali Muhammad, was killed and another policemen seriously wounded, when the local policemen clashed with paramilitary troops.

Source: (The Daily Telegraph: October 3, 1990)

Indian troops set Srinagar residential area on fire

Paramilitary troops, retaliating after a clash with Muslim freedom fighters, set a fire which swiftly spread through a downtown residential area of Srinagar on Sunday, residents claimed.

More than 100 tightly packed wooden houses were blazing or smoking, as residents carried whatever they could on their backs and fled through the narrow alleys for safety.

It was not immediately known if there were casualties from the fire.

Residents claimed the security forces shot at fire engines to prevent them from reaching the blaze, and blocked the residents escape route onto the main road.

Government officials were not in their offices and could not be reached for comment.

Security men “came and threw gunpowder on my house and my window caught fire”, said Ghulam Rasool Gilkar. He said the troops also ignited gunpowder in two or three other houses in the Cowdara area. The fire spread swiftly.

From 100 yards away, the blaze could still be seen more than three hours after residents said it began. Occasional gunfire was heard from nearby.

A din of shouting and screams rose over the rooftops from the densely populated neighbourhood, which is about one mile from the city centre.

Source: Associated Press
(The Frontier Post: October 8, 1990)

Soldiers blamed for J & K arson

The old quarter of Srinagar remained under strict curfew for the fourth day running today with soldiers patrolling the streets.

Curfew had been clamped on the area after militants clashed with security forces on Sunday. More than 30 persons, including 13 paramilitary troops, were killed during the fighting which continued till yesterday.

For the first time in four days today, journalists were allowed to enter the affected localities. Residents accused the security forces of burning down houses and shops and killing many persons who fled their homes for safety. The charges have been denied by the authorities, who have in turn blamed the separatists for the devastation.

A pall of smoke still hung over the ruins of houses and shops and sobbing men and women rummaged among the charred rubble as they looked for their belongings. Some of them claimed they saw the security forces resorting to arson after their ammunition had been exhausted.

No break in curfew has been allowed since Sunday noon and the people are running short of supplies. The roads and alleys are full of garbage and filth, posing a health hazard. In some areas the Army conducted a house-to-house search today.

Source: (The Daily Telegraph: October 11, 1990)

Fire engulfs market in Sopore town

A fierce fire raged in the Iqbal Market in the apple town of Sopore 45 km from here, after an encounter between militants and security forces this evening. This is the fourth such incident in the town in the last three months. Earlier, the security forces had allegedly set fire to two markets and two villages after encounters with militants.

The Iqbal Market has allegedly been set on fire for the second time today. Reports said that the Town Hall building had also been gutted in the fire which was still raging when reports last came in.

Source: (The Times of India: October 12, 1990)

Tourist alleges rape by J & K forces

A Canadian tourist, Ms. Laura Lambie, who arrived here 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-year-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 changed, and I was accused of being a drug pedlar, 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. Help me, but no one came. There was military camp near the place where I was kept, and I do not know how many men gang-raped me,” she alleged.

The Canadian tourist was initially reluctant to speak to newsmen as she appeared to be scared to talk to “security force men in civies.” After journalists established their identity. Ms.Laura Lambie narrated her story. When she was asked

why she did not report the matter to the police, she replied “the local police is impotent.”

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 Sikara (house-boat). Now, she is being looked after by two other foreign tourists.

Source: Yousuf Jamil
(The Daily Telegraph: October 13, 1990)

37 killed, 734 houses set ablaze in Srinagar

The Indian occupation forces (IOF) set fire to more than 734 houses in downtown Srinagar, killing 37 civilians and burning 12 elderly people who could not run and were trapped in building set ablaze.

A press release of Kashmir American Council said, according to eyewitness accounts, the Indian occupation forces prevented fire-fighters and other relief personnel from reaching the affected areas.

Even the local police vehicles were barred entry into the [areas]. Another wave of IOF ignited fires destroyed over 100 homes in Norbagh, Gander Mohalla and Safakadal localities of Srinagar on October 8.

Source: PPI - APP
(The Nation: October 20, 1990)

Kashmir darkest day

Governor Jagmohan banned the publication of all newspapers for a week. Followed by cases framed against almost all the editors and their premises raided. Action has been taken against newsmen under the anti-terrorist laws. The Indian Army arrested a BBC correspondent but the government kept on denying the charge. When he was released, the Indian ... government had to eat humble pie by saying that he had been arrested by junior army officers. As if juniors have the licence to tamper with the personal freedom of journalists.

Tales of molestation and gang-rape of Kashmiri women, married and unmarried, old and young, even those who are pregnant, have been documented by the reports of the People Council for Civil Liberties, the Initiative on Kashmir Committee and the Punjab (India) Human Rights Organisation in their published reports. Kashmiri women are stripped before their parents and husbands, then raped and ultimately shot dead. 32 cases of such molestation have been registered by the police against Indian paramilitary troopers but the legal action is being thwarted by the Indian overlords.

Thousands of young men between age 15-35 have been arrested and tortured in concentration camps, some of which are in the Jammu province and others in India. For the first time in the history of Kashmir since the days of Akbar the Mughal, Kashmiri political prisoners have been shifted to the internal jails of India in Rajasthan, Madhya Pradesh and Tamil Nadu. The detenués are subjected to third-degree methods to elicit information and force "confessions" involving Pakistan in the Kashmir struggle for independence. The

number of those killed during the past year exceeds 5,000 and the number of those who are injured and maimed for life is much more.

Source: Mir Abdul Aziz
(The Frontier Post: October 21, 1990)

Major fire in Anantnag 500 houses, shops gutted

More than 500 residential houses and shops in the Malakh Nag and Chini Chowk localities of Anantnag town were gutted in a devastating fire after an ambush on a paramilitary force patrol in which six persons were killed last evening.

Elsewhere in the valley four persons were killed in separate incidents and, according to PTI, Army has moved into Anantnag township after the imposition of curfew.

Eyewitnesses including some shopkeepers in Anantnag said after a brief exchange of fire between the Kashmiri secessionists and the paramilitary troops the latter allegedly went on a shooting spree. Most of the residents of Malakh Nag and Chini Chowk fled the fighting, but some who stayed behind claimed that the paramilitary forces sprinkled gunpowder and petrol all along the row of houses and shops. Soon the flames leapt across the two localities and left more than 500 houses and shops, including three mosques, gutted, they said.

The incident occurred after two vehicles of the para-

military forces were ambushed by the militants in the Sarnal area at about 1.30 pm yesterday. The vehicles were severely damaged but the security officials claimed there was no loss of life.

After sometime another contingent of paramilitary forces was ambushed at 4.30 pm. The militants had laid landmines to prevent the security men from chasing them. But after the arrival of some reinforcements the security forces advanced and attached the two localities where they suspected the assailants to be hiding.

“They first set ablaze the house of one Ghulam Ahmed Parray and the Sofi Medical Store, owned by Muhhad Amin Patgaroo. Thereafter, they sprinkled gunpowder and petrol all along the row of houses and shops and the flames sped through the two localities,” claimed a shopkeeper, Nissar Ahmed and a government employee, Muhammad Iqbal, along with other eyewitnesses.

Nissar Ahmed said, “Within minutes, the two localities were engulfed in flames. Most of the houses were bolted from outside by the security forces forcing the residents to jump out of windows.”

Firemen victims: Firemen, too, allegedly became victims of the security forces wrath. Gulam Mohiuddin, driver of the first fire tender to have reached the spot, has been hospitalised in a critical condition. His colleagues said as soon as he arrived with his vehicle, a spray of bullets hit him. He lost his right hand.

Source: (The Daily Telegraph: October 29, 1990)

13 killed, 500 houses gutted in Kashmir

13 people including three soldiers and a Muslim militant, have died and some 500 houses gutted in renewed violence linked to Muslim militancy in Kashmir, officials sources here said on Sunday.

Some 13 people, including two army soldiers, one militant and 10 unidentified civilians were killed after the gun fire exchanges and in the fires, the sources said, without giving details.

Some 2,000 people had been uprooted by the fires, the worst in recent weeks in Kashmir, they said.

Source: AFP

(The Frontier Post: October 30, 1990)

Gruesome details about incident of gang-rape in Kashmir

Some more details are now available about the gang-rape incident that took place in a remote Kashmiri village on the night of February 23 and 24. The Indian government denied the alleged involvement of the Indian troops on March 15. The very next day a seasoned Kashmiri journalist, Ghulam Nabi Khial, reached the remote village of District Kupwara from Srinagar. He confirmed this incident after collecting

evidence from the victims and their relatives. Mr. Khial was in New Delhi yesterday. Our colleague, Akmal Aleemi, talked to him on telephone from Washington. Here are details:

Ghulam Nabi Khial said the main reason behind delay in reporting details of this incident was that the area had a severe snowfall. District Magistrate Syed Muhammad Yasin and commissioner Wajahat Habibullah visited the village on March 3 and 18 respectively. Both officials confirmed that on the night when the Kashmiri Muslims were busy in Shab-e-Baarat prayers, scores of drunk Indian militarymen forced their entry into the village homes and committed shameful acts.

GHULAM NABI KHAL: Women in the age group of seventy and unmarried girls between 11 to 14 years of age were allegedly assaulted. I had a tape recorder with me, and I interviewed about fifteen women. The Indian troops broke into the village homes on the night of February 23. After dragging the men out from their homes and gathering them into a school hall, they forced themselves into our homes and indulged in gang-rape. The villagers identified the men coming from Rajputana Rifles, which is part of the regular army. They also confirmed that these men were involved in another such incident in the same area in August last year.

COMPERE: One Abdul Khaliq Dar, a resident of the same village whose wife and two daughters were assaulted, told Mr. Khial that he was pulled out of the house and tied up with a tree. Other men were lodged in a girls school hall. Small children were said to be present during the act of barbarism; they remained silent and frightened. Mr. Khial interviewed

the traumatised women in the same school.

Kupwara is a sensitive area for two main reasons. First, it is the birth place of Maqbool Butt, who was hanged after being tried in a murder case. He is still remembered as the hero of the movement for a free Kashmir. Second, being a border area, separatists are relatively more active here. ...

The day Mr. Khial reached Pushpoora, the militants had a clash with the Indian troops in which seven militants were killed. He says the Kashmir Valley was declared a disturbed area on July 5 and since then Indian troops never thought it wise to seek help or consult local administration while making arrests or intruding into homes. The Kashmiri journalist reports that the local police had registered a case against the Indian army on the villagers' complaint. The charges against the troops included rape, and other excesses. He thinks there is little hope of any arrest in this case. The Indian government, which is ruling Kashmir appears to have no interest in investigating such incidents.

Source: VOA
(Interview - Urdu, 0640, 1810 Hours, March 30, 1991)

A detailed report on gang-rape in Kashmir

In India, there have been new ... atrocities by the army in the northern state of Kashmir. Three thousand people have died in the past three years in clashes between Kashmiri nationalists and the Indian authorities. Now it is being claimed that

Indian troops have held a whole village hostage and tortured and raped its inhabitants. The Indian government had first rejected the allegations, but then ordered two separate inquiries. R. Makella begins his report from Kashmir in the outskirts of the capital, Srinagar:

(Sound of Machine-guns fire) The crack of Klashnikovs as young Kashmiri nationalists stage a night time raid on a military checkpoint. They hit and run in the darkness of night. There are no casualties on either side. Nonetheless, the next morning an army unit moves in and cordons off houses around the checkpoint leaving broken windows and smashed furniture in their way; they round up the young men in the area. (The army people moved into the house, broke the glass with gun bayonets, they kicked us and called us bad names and we were pushed and beaten, says a Kashmiri girl). The young people taken into military custody will be interrogated and ... probably tortured. This cycle of nationalist attack followed by Indian army reprisal has become part of everyday life in Kashmir.

But a recent incident, an army operation in the remote village of Kunoos Pushpoora inside west Kashmir, has brought relations between the people of Kashmir and the Indian army to an all time low. The village of three thousand people is in the foothills of the Himalaya, snowbound for much of the year. The Indian army agree that they did enter the village on the night of the 23rd of February. They say they questioned people and found some arms. The villagers tell me more horrifying tale. They say between eight hundred and one thousand soldiers, many of them drunk, sealed off the village at about eleven O'clock at night. Soldiers went from house to

house and took all the men to interrogation centre hastily set up in the village.

(A man narrating his tale)

“They placed a wooden box over my body. Six stood on that and then started jumping. My head was pushed into a bucket of water mixed with red peppers. Then I was removed and thrown over there and kicked and made to sit”.

But while this was happening, the women left behind in their homes say they were gang-raped by the Indian soldiers left to guard them.

(A woman narrating her tale)

“There was no one there but God to protect us. They raped us in the house, this is the end of our world. What they wished they did it; they tore my clothes apart, dragged me, pulled my hair and raped me. What more can I tell you about this, they left at me nothing. If we get them, the evil they have done [to us], we will bite them, we will eat them.”

What has convinced me and others who have made the long journey to Kunoon Pushpoora that these rapes did take place, the surprising candidness of these Muslim women, and a report we were shown from the local representative of the Indian government in the area. Divisional Commissioner,

S.M. Yasin wrote to the state commissioner of Kashmir four weeks ago:

“I was shown the rooms which were used by the armed forces for gang raping and was shown their clothes which were torn by the army. It was found that the armed forces had turned violent and behaved like violent beasts.”

Mr. Yasin spoke to me in his office in the nearby town of Kupwara:

“I have submitted a report to the authorities to conduct an inquiry and take action which will be good in the larger interest of the country.”

I found many of the people of Kunoon Pushpoora traumatised by what had happened to them. For the women, especially the young unmarried women, their whole future has been taken away from them.

“My daughters are no longer virgin, nobody will marry them, nobody will take them, we know what is our future.”

Human rights organizations, and not surprisingly Kashmiri nationalists, are now calling for an independent inquiry into what actually happened in Kunoon Pushpoora. But in India's increasingly violent struggle to keep hold of this disputed state, such legal niceties are too easily ignored.

COMPÉRE:

In the last hour or so, the Indian government has issued a statement about allegations of rape and torture in Kashmir. On the line to Delhi now is our correspondent, Sam Miller. Sam, what is the government saying?

S. MILLER:

The government is totally denying all the allegations about the rape, the alleged rape of more than twenty women in the village of Kunoon Pushpoora, some of them you just heard talking.

COMPÉRE:

What is the basis of that denial?

S. MILLER:

Well, a number of bases they see for that denial. A lot of it, of course, is circumstantial evidence and evidence from the soldiers allegedly involved. In Kashmir it is very hard to separate facts from fiction. It is very hard to make them tell the truth. But they have given a number of reasons why they conclude in this particular case that it did not happen including the fact that the village leader signed a document, a document signed after house-to-house search operation in the village, which says that there was no harassment of the villagers. They also mention that the number of women alleged to have been raped has gone up and up, each time there has been an inquiry into this incident.

Source: BBC
(News Hours - English, 1800 Hours,
April 09, 1991)

US senators seek plebiscite in J & K

Two more key US legislators have come out with statements assailing India for its uncompromising stand on Kashmir and urging the Bush administration to press for the implementation of a United Nations supervised plebiscite.

In remarks delivered on the Senate floor, senator Dennis Deconcini (Democrat), member of the Select Committee on Intelligence, said: "The Indian presence in Kashmir, which day-to-day looks more like a military occupation, is a blot on the proud record of the world's largest democracy."

He also took New Delhi to task for expelling all foreign journalists from the province, saying it created an atmosphere where "abuses by the security forces will be more difficult to detect."

Mr. Deconcini said whatever the arguments offered by the Indian Government that it must maintain public order, it should be obvious to all that strong arm tactics would ultimately prove to be futile or even counterproductive."

He pointed out that the recent events in Eastern Europe, Central America, South Africa, and even the Soviet Union "have shown how potent a force is the idea of freedom."

"India itself," he added, "after showing the power of nonviolent protest in achieving its own independence from Britain must surely understand the aspirations of Kashmir's people."

Mr. Deconcini called on New Delhi to reassess its position on Kashmir and adhere to its original commitment to settle the Kashmir problem through the ballot box. Meanwhile, representative Robert G. Torricelli (Democrat), member of the Foreign Affairs Committee, warned that without a resolution on Kashmir, “dangerous tensions in the region between India and Pakistan will continue.”

Source: Aziz Haniffa
(Tribune, India: April 21, 1991)

Indians massacre villagers

Indian security forces tied up and shot seven men and boys all members of the same Kashmiri Muslim family in this remote village at the weekend in what seems to have been a calculated act of brutality to deter villagers from helping Kashmiri separatists.

Villagers who witnessed the killing says that the seven aged from about 12 to 35 had their hands tied behind their backs lined up against a wall and shot at about a yard's range by members of the border security forces (BSP), a paramilitary force used in internal security.

Sharif Din, 45, who had been ploughing in a field below said that the seven who had already been beaten up died weeping and protesting their innocence.

The seven bodies were laid out in the courtyard of the police station at nearby Bandipur where the BSF indentified



I will shout even in my death.



You can beat me to death, but you can't close my eyes.

as 116 Battalion had taken them. Skin had been badly torn by the tiny tracks over which they had been pulled. Two boys still had rope around their feet and another was wearing a shoe the pair of which we had seen on the mountain.

The BSF reported to the police that the seven had been killed in crossfire, an eighth man had been killed earlier at Malangam. He was Mirza Khan an area commander of the little-known Al Buraq militant group for whom the security forces had been searching and who was found with a weapon. At some point he had taken shelter in the house of Raja Ali whose family was questioned and then shot.

The apparently cold-blooded reprisals by the BSF against villagers they believed to be shielding militants or weapons is further evidence of breakdown in discipline among Indian forces in Kashmir.

On Friday Mr. Girish Saxena, governor of Kashmir state, said in an interview that the security forces had been told to use restraint because every excess won recruits for the militants. "We are taking every action to ensure that any ugly incident is not allowed and that excesses are minimized."

There are signs of more restraint in Srinagar, the capital, but his orders seem to have had little effect in rural areas where much of the fighting now is.

India has not allowed Amnesty International to visit Kashmir to investigate repeated reports of human rights violations. Three weeks ago Kashmiri extremists kidnapped two Swedes in Kashmir in an attempt to force Amnesty or a

UN agency to visit the state in a move that has been widely condemned here.

As we entered Malangam village late in the afternoon hundreds of villagers, almost all men, were gathered on the hillside to bury the body of Mirza Khan.

The BSF had been unable to remove it because they had come under fire from other militants. The killings had done more to win sympathy for the separatist cause than almost anything one could imagine.

Source: David Housego - The News -
Financial Times Service
(The News, Islamabad: April 24, 1991)

Asia Watch report on human rights violations in Kashmir

There has hardly been a day when BBC correspondent Yousuf Jamil sent report from Srinagar and he did not speak of murder, bloodshed or abduction. This has been continuing since the State Assembly elections in 1987. After January last year, when the Security Forces launched their operation against the militants in Kashmir, there have been horrible human rights violations there.

In today's programme we are presenting the report of the Washington-based human right organization, "Asia Watch" about the inhuman incidents in Kashmir.

The report under review was prepared by members of this organization who visited Delhi and Kashmir Valley in December 1990. There they met some two hundred persons, including legal experts, doctors, journalists, teachers, members of the human rights organizations and ordinary Kashmiri citizens. The 110-page report was made public in May. The report briefly refers to the present political status of Kashmir. It says that under the Indian Constitution, Kashmir enjoys a special status of a sovereign state. Nevertheless, the report adds that Kashmir never enjoyed a sovereign status for the central government has been defying the constitution by making laws aimed at controlling the state. The Kashmiri leaders demand their state should be sovereign in the real sense of the term. In the past, leaders who objected to the central government's intervention were prosecuted on charges of treason. In the sixties, Kashmiris started talking of adopting other methods for a change in the valley. Thus, militant organizations came into existence. Most of them received arms and training in Pakistan.

Incidents of violence started in Kashmir after the State Assembly elections of 1987. In December 1989, the interior minister Mufti Muhammad Saeed's daughter was abducted. Later, in 1990 the government commenced a full-scale operation to quell violence. Hundreds of students were arrested, unarmed demonstrators were fired upon. Besides the brutal atrocities committed by the security forces, the report also narrates in detail the atrocities committed by the militant organizations during the past one year. The details of the activities ascribed to the security forces are spread over 68 pages, while the details of the activities of the militant organizations are spread over only 16 pages. The security forces

violations of human rights have been narrated under the caption “Extra-judicial persecution; Massacre in Hindwara; Massacre in Pattan” and so forth. The report also provides details of arson incidents, specially in Srinagar.

The report also speaks of restrictions on the freedom of press and speech. It gives account of indiscriminate arrests and detention without trial.

The report also speaks of the special laws enforced in Kashmir, including the laws for the control of terrorism and subversive activities. It makes special reference to the Jammu and Kashmir Public Safety Act.

The report concludes that because of Delhi's direct rule over Kashmir, the Kashmiris have been deprived of their civil and political rights.

The executive director of the “Asia Watch” observes that despite India being the largest democracy in the world, the authorities have abandoned the rule of law in Kashmir and resorted to the rule of gun. Among other things, the report also provides details to women's molestation. The Indian high commissioner in London, Mr. Lakhshmi M. Singhu, comments on the Asia Watch report.

LAKHSHMI MAL SINDHU: The report does not mention the violence committed by the terrorists. It does not explain what it termed “the extra-judicial action”. If the terrorists are killed in encounter with the Security Forces, it cannot be called “extra-judicial action”.

COMPÉRE: Replying to the allegation of firing upon the unarmed demonstrators, the Indian high commissioner in London maintains that most of them are unreliable because ... they are mainly aimed at maligning the government.

The high commissioner replied to the allegations of women's molestation in these words:

MR. LAKHSHMI MAL SINGHU: I have got investigated several incidents of women's raping. The investigators say the incidents have been investigated [many] times. But they all maintain that these allegations have been levelled to malign the government. ... By levelling such allegations, the terrorists actually want to secure a kind of legitimacy for themselves.

Source: BBC
(Meezan - Urdu, 2030 Hours, May 08, 1991)

Amnesty International speaks of human rights violations in India

The Amnesty International has given details of human rights violations in India. Details of the report by Anwar Khan:

The Amnesty International has said in its report that thousands of people are being kept in detention in India, including those who responded to their conscience, without being tried under prohibitory or special laws. Most of the arrests were made on political basis, which are not admitted officially. Large-scale violence and ill treatment have been common. In some provinces it was practised in an organised

manner, causing death to a large number of people in police detention. Dozens of people were reported missing or were shot dead illegally on the false excuse of police encounters. It is believed that more than one hundred peaceful demonstrators were shot dead. Only a few people have been given death sentences. The report says during Mr. V.P. Singh's government respect to human rights was promised, but because of increasing violence by the armed separatists particularly in Kashmir, Punjab, Assam, and the fact that his government had to leave, the situation has gone from bad to worse.

The director general Police Jammu and Kashmir said one thousand forty-four people were killed between January and September, including one hundred and thirty-seven civilians. In the Punjab, government forces and separatists killed three thousand eight hundred people on political grounds. According to official figures, Sikh separatists killed two hundred and sixty-five people in October only. The report says that presidential rule has been extended in the Punjab for the eighth time. In Kashmir, the Assembly was dissolved and presidential rule was imposed. A new law giving armed forces special powers was enforced in July, which allows security forces to fire at their will and kill people [without any accountability]. More than ten-thousand people were arrested for political reasons under National Security Act, Jammu and Kashmir Public Safety Act, and similar other laws. Penal cases have been filed against some political personalities.

Under the Indian National Security Act a person can be kept in detention for one year without trial. This law is being applied mostly in Jammu and Kashmir, Punjab, Andhra Pradesh, Assam and Manipur where government has come

under severe criticism. A sixty-year-old woman, Gatora Bibi, was arrested in Baroda because she had complained against the death of her husband in the violence of 1982. The report says that official figures are rarely provided about the arrested people. The New Delhi government said in January that in the Punjab alone twelve-thousand people were under detention, whereas the state government maintained that only six-thousand people were arrested. In 1990, hundreds of people were arrested. Nobody knows the number of people under arrest in Jammu and Kashmir. According to unofficial estimates, ten-to-fifteen thousand people must have been arrested there.

A Kashmiri leader Abdul Ghani Lone was arrested in April and was transferred to Jodhpur jail, where it was difficult for his relations to meet him. The director general Indian Police says nearly one thousand Kashmiri youth have been arrested from the Pakistani border. The Amnesty International holds that a journalist, Yusuf Jameel, was kidnapped by the troops and was subjected to violence for two days. Large-scale incidents of violence are continuing in Jammu and Kashmir. Attacks on women's honour by the security forces are common, particularly during house-to-house searches. Those released have told heart-rending tales.

In the States of Jammu and Kashmir, Andhra Pradesh, and Punjab, extra-judicial killings by the security forces are common. In May, police opened fire on the people attending a funeral and killed forty-seven people, who were chanting slogans in favour of independence. The police falsely stated that the people were killed in crossfire. Eyewitnesses say the police opened fire on unarmed demonstrators without giving any warning. In October, the Indian border security forces

killed sixteen unarmed Kashmiri citizens in order to avenge the murder of one of their colleagues at the hands of the separatists.

In the Punjab, indiscriminate killing continues. The Indian Attorney General himself admitted in the Supreme Court that a policy exists to kill opponents in the Punjab, and that the police can kill people wherever it wants. He also told the Court that though the announcement of the Director General Police, in which he set prizes for killing fifty-three people, tantamounts to terrorism, yet its period has expired. In June, the Governor of Punjab appealed to the police to put an end to encounter dramas.

The Amnesty International report contains numerous incidents of human rights violations in India. The report also says that despite various appeals to the Indian government, the number relating to prisoners of conscience and missing people was not revealed, and that the members of the organisation were not allowed to make investigations at the spot.

Source: VOA
(Radio Report: 1840 Hours, July 11, 1991)

Drift to disaster

[This is an abridged version of the debate on the Kashmir situation participated by what *India Today* calls "key players and observers of Kashmiri politics." The debate, unwittingly, serves as a valuational framework to the deteriorating human rights situation in Kashmir. The participants included George Fernandes, former minister Kashmir Affairs; Balraj Puri, director Jammu-based institute J & K Affairs; P.K. Dave, former chief secretary J & K Government; M.J. Akbar, former Congress (I) MP; P.A. Rosha, director National Police Academy; B.G. Verghese, former editor *The Hindustan Times* and *Indian Express*; Murli Manohar Joshi, president Bharatiya Janata Party; Riaz Punjabi, professor Kashmir University, activist civil liberties; Mathew Thomas, Lt. General (retd.), currently editor *Indian Defence Review*; Saifuddin Chaudhry, CPI (M) MP, member Parliamentary Committee on Kashmir. — ed.]

George Fernandes: We really need to go back to the unjustified dismissal of Farooq Abdullah. I've personally seen the demonstration of people's anger and their support for Farooq. Farooq had never shown any hostility to the Indian state, in fact, he had tremendous conviction in it. Yet he was branded by Delhi as an anti-national. But then came the accord which was a purely political manoeuvre. Farooq should have known better. And then the question of elections. Since 1952 the people of Kashmir never had an opportunity to express themselves in a fair and legitimate manner except in 1977 and even then there were those in the Janata Party who wanted to continue with not allowing the people to vote. But Morarji Desai overruled that with firmness. Many Kashmiris have told me that the first time they saw a ballot paper was in 1977

Against that backdrop when Farooq decided to share power with the Congress(I), large segments of people, particularly the youth turned against him. And the 1987 rigging is one more watershed which exacerbated the alienation. Farooq continued to rule in a coalition with the Congress(I). When in 1989 the Janata Dal came into power at the centre, by

which time the situation had become very bad.

I wish Jagmohan was here because he was the governor at a crucial period in Kashmir and his contribution to creating the present situation is not insignificant. Though he claim to have a lot to his credit. The damage he had caused is immeasurable. He repeatedly wrote to Delhi as to how bad the situation in Kashmir was and how things needed to be corrected.

Balraj Puri: But we must not treat it as an extension of the Hindu-Muslim problem or Kashmir and the Jammu and Kashmir state as being synonymous. In Kashmir even the Hindus were not reconciled to be a part of India. Later, practically the entire population reconciled. The Valley certainly has a very distinct personality, there is a sense of Kashmiri pride, distinctiveness, common language, homogeneity. But when they talked about the identity now, they were accused of being separatist. . . . [The] Kashmiri perception of accession was different from New Delhi's. The feeling in Kashmir was that freedom was being defended by the Indian Army whereas Indian leaders said that Kashmir had acceded to India like any other state. So that became the initial source of confusion when the Government started pressurising Kashmiri leadership to think of themselves like any other state. Even Nehru said in Parliament and elsewhere that Article 370 [the Article gives a special autonomous status to Kashmir] would wear out. This the Sheikh resisted. So the erosion of Kashmiri identity was both constitutional and political. And because of the unitary Constitution imposed on Kashmir, the Kashmiri personality could [not] grow.

P.K. Dave: Elections in Kashmir have been rigged

from the beginning. Bakshi continued it unfortunately as did Sadiq who was the nearest to a true democrat. The Congress leadership at the Centre too thought it to be the best way of ruling Kashmir. But '87 exposed them because the Muslim United Front (MUF) came up and showed how there were candidates getting votes but the ballot box was not producing them.

Meanwhile, let us also grant that there is a generational change. There has been willy-nilly an Islamisation. Big funds have come in and the educational system has become religious at lower levels. The influence of the maulvi has increased. As for the economic aspect, people talk of the thousands of crores of rupees meant for Kashmir. But Assam is no different. So that is futile talk. The people of Kashmir are happily placed with regard to food crops but it is the cities that cause the drain. Tourism is in the blood of the Kashmiri and it generally did well till disturbances intervened. The Kashmiri does not take neglect lying down. He screams at the top of his voice and fortunately he has had a local leadership that got support from the Central Government for border roads, for improvement of communications, even if slowly and inefficiently. Over the years this broke down and corruption became all-pervasive.

As far as rigging is concerned, the method changed from election to election. I was the chief secretary and this office is isolated from the rigging mechanism. A local official, quite a famous officer now, was the chief electoral officer thrice, and he had perfected the art. I am sure even Sadiq merely said: Do it! It was a blind spot, people thought without this there would be chaos.

Akbar: So the seats allotted to the Jamaat-i Islami used to be pre-designed and pre-determined.

Dave: Yes, as was for Congress(I) in '87.

Akbar: '87 is a different matter, I am just talking about '71 - '72. Were the seats won by the Jamaat in 1972 also handed out by rigging? It is important because the growth of Jamaat and its influence is a critical factor in Islamisation which has suddenly hit us. The Amir of the Kashmir branch of Jamaat does not owe loyalty to India.

P.A. Roshia: It was in '72 that the Jamaat for the first time contested the elections. Till then they said they would not take the oath of allegiance, they would not contest. I agree with Dave that Delhi believed that it is okay to give them the form of democracy but not the substance. It was done systematically because even in '71 the Plebiscite Front was banned — this was done usually before every election. The Sheikh and Mir Afzal Beg were externed to prevent their influencing it.

B.G. Verghese: When Farooq Abdullah was thrown out in '84, it was with the support of the Jamaat. The Gul Shah government was formed with the full backing of Mrs. Gandhi. This shows how for partisan, political reasons, national interests have been willfully and openly sacrificed time and again.

Akbar: It was the '83 elections which communalized Kashmir politics as nothing else before — through the re-settlement bill. Mrs. Gandhi did play the resettlement card by pointing across the border. That created the reaction which

began communalising politics.

Murli Manohar Joshi: In 1986 when Gul Shah was removed and Farooq again brought to the centre stage, another communalisation process took place. You destroyed temples and created a lot of communal elements. Up to that time there were people who came to defend temples and Hindu families. So a communal atmosphere was created and Gul Shah blamed for destroying the temples, to pull him down and prop up Farooq.

Akbar: I don't understand the logic.

Puri: Let me elaborate. There is a very strong suspicion that the first communal trouble in Kashmir was started partly to weaken the Kashmiri identity, and create a wedge between the two brothers-in-law. The Sheikh family is a symbol of Kashmiri identity. The thinking in Delhi was that *Kashmiriat* is a threat to Indian identity, it should be weakened. Fundamentalism would help, so use the Jamaat or some sort of Muslim united front. A prominent person told me this.

Akbar: Why don't you name the person? For all you know tomorrow he may be the home minister supported by the BJP.

Puri: The person I quote is no less than former governor Jagmohan. He said: "I don't agree with your thesis of this Kashmiri identity. I think this needs to be demolished." I asked why. He said because as long as Kashmiri identity remains, India's identity will always be threatened. I argued

that Kashmir had acceded to India to defend that identity. He said as long as Kashmiri identity is there, Pakistan and America would continue to exploit it. So we must demolish it. My final argument was that if you destroy Kashmiri identity what would you replace it with? Muslim identity?

Joshi: This policy must have got approval from the Central Government.

Dave: Knowing the Government of India fairly well, I would not necessarily say that what Jagmohan discussed with Balraj Puri was the government of India's planned design. It may have been just Jagmohan on his own.

Joshi: But Jagmohan had written something in a letter to Rajiv about how he was being instructed by Mrs. Gandhi. So it could be Mrs. Gandhi and later on Rajiv. I don't think the governor of Kashmir would do anything without having a concurrence from the Government of India on such a sensitive matter.

Vergheze: On the issue of these *mandirs* being demolished I would like to carry it further. Certainly there were episodes in 1986 but in '90 - '91 there is another phenomenon: deliberate stories are spread that a number of *mandirs* and shrines in Srinagar, Baramullah, Anantnag, Sopore, have been demolished, desecrated. I have investigated this and said this is not true. When I say it is not true I am told that I am a liar. I am a pseudo-secularist, I am a Muslim appeaser.

Troubled psyche:

Rosha: We took up another issue with George and Mufti: why citizens of other parts of the country are not allowed to buy land in Kashmir and whether similar restrictions apply in other states like Himachal Pradesh. Now this has nothing to do with Article 370—Article 370 only says that the definition of a state subject cannot be unilaterally changed by the Government of India.

Saifuddin Choudhury: We have to respect the identity of various kinds of people. I am all for regional autonomy for Ladakh, for Jammu, for Kashmir and then for Kashmir within the Indian Union, for West Bengal, for Tamil Nadu, for everybody. But how to protect the Kashmiri identity is the most important thing. If we are to really get Kashmir back to the secular fold, then in the rest of the country we should also put down the elements who are espousing communalism.

Joshi: It's not that one fine morning hundreds of people took up arms against India and raised the question of Kashmiri identity. There have been forces in Kashmir who have been working against us, there was a hate-India campaign. There was a terrific pro-Pakistani campaign, an independence campaign. Kashmir is not merely a problem between India and Pakistan or between Kashmiris and the rest of India. International forces wanted to keep Kashmir outside the pale of the great Indian dominion. Have they reconciled to the idea of India? No. Do the developments in Kashmir and Punjab have any relation to the Bangladesh experience? There is a thinking in Pakistan to teach us a lesson for Bangladesh. That

psychology works.

Even in Assam, the problem is not purely local. The militants have received arms from outside the country. There have been training centres on the Burmese border. If you try to localize a problem as a Hindu-Muslim one, you are using it for political ends.

Choudhury: When we went to Jammu as a committee we met many young students who were demanding an increase in stipends. Some of them were Hindus and some Muslims. A Hindu student told us: “If you fail to convince Jagmohan that there has to be an increase in stipends we will also shout *Pakistan Zindabad* because that will give us more money.”

Puri: Bangladesh had two effects. Vindication of culture-based identities and Pakistan’s attempt to exploit the Kashmir issue. It has been doing that since 1947 but why did it succeed this time? You have no idea of the anger that existed in Kashmir in 1965. When the call for social boycott of Congressmen was given, none could enter any shop. If a Congressman died, nobody would bury him. There was complete alienation—it was much worse than what we had in ’88-89. There was forced integration—the Government’s nomenclature was changed—causing a flare up in Kashmir.

Vergheze: It is being widely circulated that place names are being changed as a factor in Islamization like Anantnag to Islamabad. I heard that security forces say: Somebody’s going by bus to Islamabad? They slap them. Anyway, in the present context, the movement is led by people

under 30. There is a new generation; therefore, even to talk of accession is irrelevant. It's like talking of what Akbar and Shahjahan did—it's history. Something happened between '84 and '87— that was the turning point. People of the new generation are also looking at happenings in the rest of India — communalisation and the agitation about Article 370.

Riaz Punjabi: What sustains militancy is the alienation of the masses. Throughout the Dogra rule two important taxes were levied on Kashmir—99 per cent of whose population was Muslim. A tax to raise money for the Maharaja's temple, and another for the repair of temples. Nobody protested. Even Sheikh Abdullah didn't make an issue out of this.

There was a cultural consciousness, not a religious consciousness. Even the anger over joblessness was not targeted at Hindus. When Jinnah Sahib came in May '44 to sort out differences between the old Muslim Conference and the National Conference, he had to face hostile crowds, shoes were hurled. He was called names when he said the only representative party according to 99 per cent of the Muslims he met was the Muslim Conference, led by a Jammu-based Punjabi-speaking leadership headed by Chaudhary Ghulam Abbas. He couldn't understand what the problems were.

There was no compulsion, either historical or geographical, for Kashmir to join India. But after it joined this federation, the issue is how we treat it. Kashmiri identity which was secular was slowly Islamised due to what was happening outside Kashmir and within.

Secondly, there are forces who would say that perhaps

the Kashmiri identity means Muslim identity—this is not true. Thirdly, the Kashmiris were never integrated in national life. You always said: “*Bhai* what is this special status, finish with this.” When you talked of diluting Article 370, we accepted it. It didn’t make any difference to the Kashmiri except that he heard: “You are now under us, we’ll get you.” Kashmir aligned with you on the promise of federalism secularism, democracy. But you have none. Now when Farooq challenged the Congress(I), it partly satisfied the urge of the people. There he was aligned with all the opposition parties, attending opposition conclaves. But then came the accord. Rajiv Gandhi has announced that he would give the state Rs 1,000 crore. So the people said, Okay, this is a sell-out but at least we’ll have some economic benefit. But after three or four months poor Farooq realized: “Oh, no! Even if the prime minister of the country concedes the state needs special treatment, you cannot get it.” If you are cut off from the rest of the country for eight months, if you don’t have water or electricity when it is minus 14 degrees centigrade, we can’t help it.

But the nation is being told, look how thousands of crores go to the Kashmiris. They don’t know that technically you give us Rs. 10 and then take away Rs. 9. But you give an impression that this pampered lot is being given a lot of money. Then Farooq tried to solve the electricity problem. There was a hike in tariff. People, mostly youngsters, protested and came out on the streets. They were fired upon. By ’89, there was a sense of siege. No employment, no cultural integration, no sense of security.

Mathew Thomas: Now nobody is prepared anymore to discuss either Article 370 or plebiscite. Till 1957, we believed that plebiscite could be held at a stage when the people of Kashmir are genuinely happy with India. Now nobody, not even the media, wants to talk about it. It will take at least 10 years to bring Kashmir into the mainstream.

Rosha: It is evident that in '80 and '89 there was a perceptible weakening of the political will to fight those forces and it was reflected in the administration's actions also. The most blatant anti-national actions would go unnoticed. For instance, when in August '89 they gave a call for a black-out on Independence Day and boycott of the official function, half the seats in the parade, which all officials should attend, were vacant. All Farooq Abdullah said was he would call for an explanation. The Srinagar corporation itself switched off its lights that evening. And Yusuf Halwai, a prominent National Conference worker who kept his lights on, was shot dead in broad daylight. So we asked the Cabinet what steps have you taken to meet this outrage politically. The official response was: we will recite the *fatiha* for him and give his son Rs. 1 lakh.

Again, during the parliamentary elections in Baramulla, the militants put a coffin in front of the polling booth, saying this is for the first man who casts his vote. But the administration did nothing.

Dave: But this is so for most of India.

Puri: But from 1947, an unstated policy of the Government has been that there should be only one party

functioning in the state. When Ashok Mehtar and I went to form a branch of the Praja Socialist Party (PSP), we were mercilessly beaten up. Evidence shows whenever there have been two political parties in Kashmir, the secessionist and communal forces have been marginalised. And we have also created a sort of virginity test of patriotism that a Kashmiri must not only be loyal to India, he must also be loyal to the Kashmir Government, the Central Government, the ruling party here, and in Kashmir.

Joshi: One reason for this state of affairs is that you didn't allow political assimilation of the people of Kashmir. It was exploited in Indian politics—sometimes it was projected as the only secular model in the country—and asked to remain in a ghetto. The rulers wanted to use it as a secular showpiece, not as part of the country.

Akbar: But Kashmir as a secular showpiece disappeared with the arrest of Sheikh Abdullah in 1953. After that it was governed more by the need to keep it as a piece of India rather than a showpiece. The reason why the Opposition in Kashmir was not allowed, never emerged, or could not grow, was because the Opposition consisted of the Plebiscite Front.

Reversing the slide:

Punjabi: The people who are the backbone of this ongoing movement are the youth, chunks of whom for the past 20 years have been fed on plebiscite. They were not accommodated by the National Conference so they tried to go to the Congress but ended up with some splinter groups. Then there were enough police-men to teach them a lesson during elec-

tions. That was how at the domestic level these youths got alienated.

Rosha: As far as the law and order question is concerned, I feel the attitude of the paramilitary forces that every Kashmiri Muslim is an anti-national, an alien, has been a problem. A corollary to this has been the unfortunate distrust of the Kashmiri bureaucracy and, what hurts me especially, the Jammu & Kashmir Police. I would categorically say that the police here are as loyal as any other force in the country. Of course, there will be black sheep.

And the paramilitary forces, of course, are performing a very difficult task in difficult circumstances but having said that it is very disappointing that there has been no consistent effort to restore the due processes of law. Till this is done, there can be no accountability. A lot of harm is being caused by the humiliation in the day-to-day attitudes—when you search a bus, the way you talk to them, the way you go into houses with the presumption that they are all Pakistanis. What we can do is to give a civil face to the administration, where the law and order functions are again entrusted to the commissioners and deputy commissioners. Right now the bullet seems to be the only answer to every infraction of law.

As for the depopulated zone, very few people know that this was tried in Kashmir after the 65 infiltration. There was a 5-km belt in the districts of Rajouri and Poonch which involved 24 villages. But as one of our finest officers P.S. Bhagat said, this was like admitting defeat before you even fight. It was then resettled in 1974. Now the legal armoury given to Kashmir is much heavier than given to any other state.

We have the Enemy Agents Act, the TADA, the Disturbed Areas Act, the Armed Forces Special Act, the J & K Public Safety Act. But to say that because the militants are outside the law, the response too must be outside the law is not valid.

Punjabi: In combating the insurgency they have eliminated large chunks of the population in the past two years. But we don't get to know of even a quarter of it through human rights reports. The BSF, CRPF and maybe the army are different. But everyday there are humiliations, tortures, picking up of innocent people. You are emotionally losing everyday in Kashmir. And if you keep maligning human rights organizations, there will be no channel of communication left.

Puri: By now the degree of annihilation of Kashmir is almost total. And the gulf between India and Pakistan is much wider. There is no longing in the POK and our part of Kashmir for any unity. The two are linguistically, culturally and ethnically so distinct. But the way we are dealing with the crisis, no non-terrorist channel of anger and discontent remains. Do anti-India slogans deserve punishment like shooting to death? I remember I was in Anantnag when a *baraat* was attacked by some army men, some people were killed and the bride was gang-raped.

Verghese: Not the army.

Puri: Army, army, army, army! I challenge you to prove what you say. The incident was completely blanked out by the national press. But I happened to be in London, and the papers there were full of details of the incident. So if the

KASHMIR SUFFERS

human rights organizations cease functioning here it will not help in any way. There is a wide scope for a dialogue with human rights groups. And you also need a dialogue between Kashmiri Pandits and Kashmiri Muslims, between Kashmiri Muslims and Jammu people.

Source: (India Today, August 31, 1991)

- “If, after a proper plebiscite, the people of Kashmir said, ‘We do not want to be with India,’ we are committed to accept that. We will accept it, though it might pain us. We will not send any army against them. We will accept that, however hurt we might feel about it, we will change the constitution if necessary.”

Source: Jawaharlal Nehru
(Statement in the Indian Parliament, June 26, 1952)

- “I want to stress that it is only the people of Kashmir who can decide the future of Kashmir. It is not that we have merely said that to the United Nations and to the people of Kashmir; it is our conviction and one that is borne out by the policy that we have pursued, not only in Kashmir but everywhere.”

“I started with the assumption that it is for the people of Kashmir to decide their own future. We will not compel them. In that sense, the people of Kashmir are sovereign.”

Source: Jawaharlal Nehru
(Statement in the Indian Parliament, August 7, 1952)
(The Friday: May 22, 1990)

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Nasr Chambers Block 19 Markaz F-7 Islamabad
Ph: 818230/814711 Fax: 051-826793 Telex: 5771 IPS PK