

Global War on Terror or Colonial Imperialism? An Eco-Postcolonial Historiographic Study for Peace and Justice of Kashmir

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ABSTRACT

The status of the disputed territory of Indian occupied Jammu and Kashmir, in the wake of the unilateral, illegal, and unconstitutional revocation of Article 370 and 35A by India on August 5, 2019 has raised questions that may be addressed by undertaking a historiographic analysis of this realm. While the Indian government portrays its movements in Kashmir as being linked to a broader Global War on Terror (GWOt) against the Kashmiri militant factions, a close reading of Kashmiri resistance against the Indian government's actions tells a different story. Showing how an environmental ethical resistance of Kashmiris is being framed in the light of GWOt, this paper examines the colonial imperialist tendencies that existed even prior to the 1947 partition. Stating the environmental justice or eco-postcolonial ethic for this land of Kashmir, this paper foregrounds the need for expressing the resistance against the oppression of colonizing powers in this postcolonial age. Consequently, this paper studies the issue of Kashmir from the perspective of interpellations, the study of which,

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problematizes this Indian popularized subterfuge of Global War on Terror in the name of security and peace. An impartial study of some shelved historical texts helps us to belie all the concocted rhetoric that has lobbied for three quarters of a century.

Introduction: Evolution of the Narrative of GWOT in the Context of Kashmir

Francis Bacon's opening sentence of his 16th Century essay, "Of Truth," with rhetorical overtones, "What is Truth, said jesting Pilate, and would not stay for an answer" cannot be truer in the context of Indian unilateral, illegal, and unconstitutional revocation of Article 370 and 35A on August 5, 2019.¹ The world seems to have bought the Indian narrative of India's global war on terror without looking for truth in the readymade answers tabled out for this "South Asia's Palestine,"² and without inquiring into the actual situation of Kashmir. August 5, 2019 is actually a fruition of a series of Indian "deceptions"³ and interpellations not its beginning. For instance, we see a well-prepared documentary launched on the same day with the title 'Kashmir: The Story | Full Documentary On The History & Timelines Of Kashmir Valley' in order to serve as the only documentary for the saga of Kashmir history. In other words, August 5, 2019 is a well-planned Indian stratagem to justify its (so called) war on Kashmiri terror. It is preceded and

1 Part of this study is extracted from my Ph.D thesis and part of it was also presented in an International Conference. The aspects of research mentioned in the abstract are connected to a published article "Impasse of Kashmir and Recurring Pretexts: A Historiographical Analysis" (2020), which, through a historiographic study has busted some myths associated with the Instrument of Accession of Kashmir and other related popularized narratives related to Kashmir's history. It may be accessed at: doi.org/10.13169/polipers.17.1.0083. The present study is an extension of this argument made in this published paper.

2 Lost Kashmiri History, "Kashmir South Asias Palestine," *Front Line Club* (Nov 2012). Accessed Feb 17, 2014. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=pY49WDtdYtc>

3 Alastair Lamb, *Incomplete Partition: The Genesis of Kashmir Dispute 1947-1948* (Hertingfordbury, Lahore: Roxford Books, Services Book Club, 1998, 1999), 159.

followed by a plethora of books and discussion platforms. As a result, we see some critics like Stephen Tankel arguing a “potential for more Pulwamas,” while others like Ashutosh Varshney put forth an ambivalent argument about the need for democracy on the one hand and questions the very foundations of the special status of Kashmir on the other.⁴

Such Indian political narratives are not new. In the last part of the 20th Century (and a little prior to the 1990s furore in Kashmir) there are programmes like *Bharat Ek Khoj* [Urdu: India: A Search], a fifty-three-episode 1988 production of Doordarshan (the Government of India’s Public Service Broadcaster). Made available on the internet in 2016, the programme is a documentary-drama based on the much publicized Nehru’s book *Discovery of India*.⁵ While the balanced approaches of historians and critics like Alastair Lamb, Victoria Schofield, Suvir Kaur, Sanjay Kak, Arundhati Roy, or Gautam Navlakha are pushed off stage from the mainstream modes of global knowledge platforms. For instance, the world may refer to the above-mentioned documentary released on August 5, 2019 but would marginalize the documentaries like *Jashn e Azadi* ([Independence Celebrations] by Sanjay Kak and so critics like Ipsita Chakravarty, in her article argue in favour of the need to watch this 2007 Kashmir documentary ‘Jashn-e-Azadi’ again and again.⁶

This paper, foregrounding the important facets of Kashmiri history, subverts the stratagems and myths that have been created around history and contemporary identity of Kashmir

4 *The Future of Kashmir*, November Tuesday, 2019. Accessed March 15, 2021, Council on Foreign Council: <https://www.cfr.org/event/future-kashmir>

5 Shyam Benegal. *Bharat Ek Khoj—The Discovery of India*. Sep 3, 2016. Accessed April 5, 2021, https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=2fW3ENBh_bs&ab_channel=PublicResourceOrg

6 Ipsita Chakravarty. *Why the 2007 Kashmir Documentary ‘Jashn-e-Azadi’ needs to be watched again in 2016*. March 21, 2021. Accessed March 21, 2021, Scroll.in: <https://scroll.in/reel/812212/why-the-2007-kashmir-documentary-jashn-e-azadi-needs-to-be-watched-again-in-2016>

and states an environmental ethics of Kashmir.⁷ It also evaluates the much talked about and promoted, “harmony between Kashmiri Muslims and Hindus” which, as Kanjwal writes in her review of Nandita Haksar’s book, *The Many Faces of Kashmiri Nationalism*, “has been threatened by events in the region in recent decades, and the increasing shift towards right-wing Hindu and Muslim politics within both communities.”⁸ It may also be read as an extension of my

7 See Note 1.

8 Hafsa Kanjwal review of Nandita Haksar, *The Many Faces of Kashmiri Nationalism*, (2015).

https://www.academia.edu/37281195/Nandita_Haksar_The_Many_Faces_of_Kashmiri_Nationalism_review_by_Hafsa_Kanjwal_KashmirConnected

There are a number of contemporary works of historiography by Mona Bhan et. al., Nosheen Ali, Faisal Devji, Chitralakha Zutshi, Christopher Snedden, and many others, whose writings, in a way, try to dilute the Kashmir issue with, sometimes, patronizing narratives or outright convoluted facts. This paper, therefore, addresses such blanket assertions of environmentalism and states the environmental ethic of Kashmir with historically accurate facts which may be found in writers much prior to the ones mentioned above, writers like Alastair Lamb, William E. Baker, Victoria Schofield, Josef Korbel, and many others. To put it simplistically with an analogy, it may be said, that you may try to grow flowers in your neighbour’s backyard, but it is your neighbour’s and can never be yours. Similarly, by dragging Gilgit Baltistan area into the discussion about Kashmir Valley with the rhetoric of “The Story of Kashmir and Its People: Beyond the Metanarrative of Political Conflict” (Zutshi, 2018), or the small strip of Azad Kashmir which was acquired by self-struggle of Sardar Qayyum in 1947 need not be problematized as the popular Indian metanarrative is trying to do from all possible dimensions of social, print, and visual media. With the pervasive rhetoric that Indian tabloids have been, and are, building they never discuss Jammu massacre, Gawkadal Bridge massacre, Papa 2 atrocities, and routine massacres of Kashmiri people alongside their, so called, ‘stories of Kashmir and its people beyond the metanarrative of political conflict’. For instance, “Death and Life Under Occupation: Space, Violence, and Memory in Kashmir” is the essay by a Kashmiri academic, Muhamad Junaid, in the book, *Everyday Occupations: Experiencing Militarism in South Asia and the Middle East* (2013). He writes:

Paramilitary patrols picked up young men and teenagers on the streets, beat them up, and left them maimed. They broke into houses, shattered windowpanes, harassed men, and molested women. No cases were registered. No deaths were investigated. No warrants were produced before making arrests. No assessments for compensation were made for the properties damaged. Given their long experience with state violence, Kashmiris expected no such gestures either....State violence was nothing new in Kashmir....Given the network of occupied spaces in urban and rural

earlier paper, “Impasse of Kashmir and Recurring Pretexts: A Historiographical Analysis” (2020). As also mentioned in that paper, there is a need to keep our facts up to date and need to foreground the marginalized knowledge that “before the tribal invasion, negotiations at a high level were in progress over Kashmir’s accession to India.”⁹ This fact can be read from the perspective of the popularized phrase of global war on terror, that was, and is, being meted out to the Kashmiri Muslims throughout their history. Using some seminal historical books, besides exposing the myths concerning Gilgit Baltistan area,¹⁰ the paper mentioned above highlighted the fact, that like other states of Hyderabad, Junagarh, and Kashmir as a state, were more of an ally and buffer zones than actual subject of the British Indian government.

regions, Indian soldiers could relatively easily quarantine public spaces. (159-160).

Junaid, himself belonging to Kashmir, is an eyewitness of all this bloodshed and massacre, lucky enough to have escaped the death trap of Kashmir. He is a scholar living in diaspora and has barely escaped the State violence meted out to the Kashmiris. Thus, perhaps, Hafsa Kanjwal, is right in pointing out that “it is perhaps not useful to ‘transcend’ political conflict, but rather, foreground it as working alongside other arenas of conflict”, 2018, 23.

9 Alastair Lamb. *Crisis in Kashmir: 1947-1966*. (London: Routledge & Kegan Paul Ltd., 1966), 44-5.

10 In the paper mentioned in note 1, the following explanation clears all the myths concerning Gilgit Baltistan. Lamb writes that “Gilgit region threw off all vestige [sic] of Dogra rule and declared for Pakistan.” This was because Gilgit region never succumbed to Dogra power, and resultantly, ‘Dogras were never able to establish the kind of power they enjoyed in the Vale of Kashmir or, even, in Ladakh.’ Lamb contests the ‘tendency to treat the whole State as if it were a homogenous unit,’ contrary to a recently emerging narrative invidiously proclaimed by writers like Nosheen Ali in her recent book, *Delusional States: Feeling Rule and Development in Pakistan’s Northern Frontier* (2019). A similar anomaly may be seen in *Resisting Occupation in Kashmir* (Bhan, 2018, 9). Lamb, however, maintains that Gilgit area has ‘no long historical tradition for the existence of Kashmir as the term is now understood. It, therefore, comes to light, that since Gilgit independently declared for Pakistan long before Kashmir became a dispute, there can be, and are, serious reservations for any modern discourses that attempt to problematize the facts about Gilgit Baltistan area.

War on Terror or War of Terror?

We can trace this, now readily used term of war on terror,¹¹ in the earlier history of Kashmir. In the reign of Gulab Singh, who was not a ruler of Kashmir, but the ruler of Jammu and who had “worked his way up to be a general in Ranjit Singh’s army” was rewarded by the British for his treason of staying away from the war that the British had declared against Sikhs in 1846. The British, very conveniently, sold Kashmir to him for “seventy-five lac rupees.” Gulab Singh grabbed all the wealth that he could retrieve and “promoted *begaar* [Urdu: forced labor]...in order to recover the [paid] price.”¹² A number of historians like Alastair Lamb, Victoria Schofield, and modern-day Kashmiri writers like Basharat Peer give reference of the book of a Srinagar based British historian, Robert Thorpe, whose father was British and mother, a Kashmiri woman. An excerpt from his book, titled *Cashmeer Misgovernment* brings forth the implications of the newly neologized phrase of global war on terror. It is actually Gulab Singh and his son Pratap Singh’s war of terror on the innocent Kashmiris as early as 1842. Thorpe writes:

None save those who have seen such can fully realize the horrors. Patiently the Kashmiris toil onwards through the drifting snow. Many encourage each other with words of hope. They might reach the other side in safety. But strength departs and the wind paralyzes the sinews. Slowly the conviction fastens upon them that they shall never quit those frightful solitudes, never see again their homes or those who dwelt there waiting for their return, far off in the sunny vale of Kashmir.¹³

Like any modern-day hegemonic autocracy, Pratap Singh plans to silence Thorpe, and he is attacked with daggers on a winter morning of 1868. This brave writer dies at only thirty years of age and is buried in a Christian cemetery behind Lal Chowk in Srinagar. This is one example from many, of the

11 *The Terror Trap: The Impact of The War on Terror on Muslim Communities Since 9/11* (Coalition for Civil Freedoms, 2021).

12 Basharat Peer, *Curfewed Night: A Frontline Memoir of Life, Love and War in Kashmir* (London: Harper Press, 2010), 123.

13 Peer, *Curfewed Night*, 123.

war of terror in Kashmir history that was used to silence the voice of truth. Gul Muhammad Wani, a Professor of Political Science at the Kashmir University, in his article “Political Assertion of Kashmiri Identity,” quotes Robert Thorpe’s words:

Towards the people of Cashmeer we have committed a wanton outrage, gross injustice, and an act of tyrannical oppression which violates every human and honourable sentiment which is opposed to the whole spirit of modern civilization and is in direct opposition to every tenet of religion we profess.¹⁴

Thus, this war of terror, now euphemized as war on terror, in the context of Kashmiri identity has long historical evidence. When Kashmiris are framed as perpetrators against whom Indian government must exercise GWOT, the Kashmiris are interpellated to adopt extreme measures of resistance to record their grievances.

While Robert Thorpe was silenced by the son Pratap Singh, a very similar account of his father is recorded as atrocities of Dogra rule in Lamb’s third book on Kashmir. Lamb tells us that G. T. Vigne’s book, *Travels in Kashmir, Ladak, Iskardo, the Countries Adjoining the Mountainous Course of the Indus, and the Himalaya, North of the Punjab*,¹⁵ written in 1842 is one of the earliest accounts of the atrocities meted out by the Dogra rule. Citing from Vigne’s book, Lamb writes:

[A]n insurrection had taken place near Punch against the authority of Gulab Singh. He had gone in person to suppress it, and succeeded in doing so. Some of his prisoners were flayed alive under his own eye....He then ordered one or two of the skins to be stuffed with straw; the hands were stiffened, and tied in an attitude of supplication; the corpse was then placed erect; and the head, which had been severed from the body, was reversed as it rested on the neck. The figure was planted by the wayside, that passersby

14 Gul Mohammad Wani, “Political Assertion of Kashmiri Identity” in *The Parchment of Kashmir: History, Society, and Polity*, ed. N. A. Khan (New York: Palgrave, Macmillan, 2012), 126.

15 Lamb, *Incomplete Partition*.

might see it; and Gulab Singh called his son's attention to it, and told him to take lesson in the art of governing.¹⁶

The marginalization and erasure cited in the quotes above ensue as a consequence of the economic expansion of the sale of the vale of Jammu and Kashmir to Gulab Singh for seventy-five lacs (\$ 300,000 approx.) by Lord Lawrence in 1846. The rule of Gulab Singh, which was already there when Vigne is writing his book in 1842, results in sealing the fate of hapless people of Kashmir who were sold "along with the land."¹⁷ This "marginalization of Kashmiris," as stated by Wani¹⁸ begins with 1586 Mughal colonialism and 1846 sale deed to Dogra ruler Gulab Singh.

Historians have also written how Maharaja Pratap Singh's loss in 1889 was again made a gain by the British, in favour of Dogra rule in 1921. The trickle effect of all these autocratic rulers made a Prime Minister like Jawahar Lal Nehru concede to the Kashmiris in a conference in Sopore that the "Dogra government forced you to lead subhuman existence".¹⁹ We may not find such facts about Nehru in the above-mentioned programme based on his book, *Discovery of India*. And though Nehru declared: "Kashmir is not a commodity or sale to be bartered. It has individual existence and its people must be the final arbiters of their future," later he backed out completely on this plebiscite proposal. Gandhi also believed "that the will of the Kashmiris should decide the fate of Jammu and Kashmir and the sooner it was done the better."²⁰ Nehru and Gandhi's pseudo-proclamations are never meant to be materialized in the manoeuvres that we have been, and are, witnessing in Kashmir.²¹

16 Lamb, *Incomplete Partition*, 116.

17 Aqil Ahmad Azmi. *Kashmir: An Unparalleled Curfew* (Karachi: Zyzzyva Publishing, 1990), 45.

18 Wani, "Political Assertion of Kashmiri Identity," 126.

19 Abdul Hakeem. *Paradise on Fire: Syed Ali Geelani and the Struggle for Freedom in Kashmir* (Leicestershire: Revival Publications, 2014), 2.

20 Hakeem, *Paradise on Fire*, 4, 8, 14.

21 For details, see article mentioned in note 1.

The unconstitutional revocation of Article 370 and 35A,²² is nothing but a recurring pattern of these traumatic scenes of death and torture which we witness in Kashmiri history. This, so called, war on terror is problematized by many writers and critics when we study other independent sources like *Paradise on Fire: Syed Ali Geelani and the Struggle for Freedom in Kashmir* by Abdul Hakeem, a pen-name of a British born writer. Hakeem states an ethical concern about Kashmir in his book when he elaborates on the law of Jammu and Kashmir as distinct from Indian law and the fact that India cannot claim Kashmir to be an “integral part of India”²³ on legal grounds too. He discusses how the law was maneuvered by different government officials to suit to their advantages. The atrocities of “handpicked” rulers like Bakhshi Ghulam Ahmad holding government from 1953-63 and the school teacher, Sheikh Abdullah, who being prisoned to be disciplined, signs the “Kashmir Accord” in 1975 and renounces “his demand for a plebiscite” after he comes out of the prison. The graphic details, with statistical data, of Hakeem’s account etched against the backdrop of all the, so called, Muslim leaders, the reviling of all assurances and promises of Hindu leaders like Gandhi and Nehru, the “strictly confidential”²⁴ letters to Indira Gandhi in 1966, the shamelessly rigged elections (except for 1977), the blatant disregard of UN Security Council Resolutions, to the extent, and even more, that L. K. Advani, the former home minister, is seen to be “personally” supervising “the demolition of the Babri Mosque on 6th December 1992”²⁵ and calling it a Kashmir problem in 1995, may be cited as some examples of Indian war of terror [The fact that Balbir Singh,

22 Justice (R) Fakhar-Un-Nisa Khokhar. *Abrogation of Article 370 and 35A by India*, 2019, 2021, Sep 7, Accessed April 15, 2021, *The News International*: <https://www.thenews.com.pk/print/523121-abrogation-of-article-370-and-35a-by-india> & Nosheen Ali, et al., “Geographies of Occupation in South Asia” *Feminist Studies* 45, no. 2 (2019): 574-580. doi:10.1353/fem.2019.0014.

23 Hakeem, *Paradise on Fire*, 14.

24 Hakeem, *Paradise on Fire*, 12.

25 Hakeem, *Paradise on Fire*, 14.

one of the demolishers of the masjid embraces Islam soon after in 1993 never becomes a common knowledge, is also a kind of selling the rhetoric of war on terror of the media tabloids].²⁶

Similarly, Arundhati Roy questions this “post 9/11 frenzy,” the United States government’s “gloating prematurely over its ‘victory’ in Afghanistan,” and the ongoing “Gujarat pogrom.” She demands in clear cut terms: “Who crafted our collective conscience on the Parliament Attack case? Could it have been the facts we gleaned in the papers? The films we saw on TV?”²⁷ The hoax of Indian war on Kashmiri terror is exposed howsoever we see it; whether they are the atrocities of old colonial history of Gulab Singh or the present-day extra-judicial murders of thousands of the Kashmiri youth, the Shujaat Bokharis, the Afzal Gurus, the Parliament attack case as Roy points out, the Burhan Wanis, the 2019 Pulwama attack, and the subsequent jailing of Kashmiri nation on August 5, 2019; the pattern of this war of terror is a blatant disregard to the eco-postcolonial space of Kashmir.

Implications of War of Terror in Old Kashmiri History

This war of terror seems to be forgetting an extremely important fact; that economic expansion has never worked with the peaceful nature of this land. Even if we go further back into the memory lane of this land, we see that even the great Indian Emperor Ashoka, who founded this “Srinagri (the City of Wealth) around 250 B.C. on the outskirts of what is modern Srinagar,”²⁸ renounces violence after one bloody battle, and becomes a Buddhist. Much later, in the early 14th Century, a Tibetan prince Rinchana, a seeker of truth, becomes the ruler of Kashmir and wants to convert to

26 https://lifeinsaudiArabia.net/balbir-singh-who-was-involved-in-demolishing-babri-masjid-has-built-90-new-mosques/#He_embraced_Islam_and_became_Mohammaed_Amir

27 Arundhati Roy, *Capitalism: A Ghost Story* (Chicago, Illinois: Haymarket Books, 2014), 80.

28 Peer, *Curfewed Night*, 111.

Hinduism. “But the Brahmin priests refused to convert him, unsure which caste Rinchana would have” as Peer tells us. His Muslim friend and adviser, Shah Mir, tells him about Islam. He sleeps in his palace to wake up to the Muslim call of prayer, and watches a Sufi saint, Bulbul Shah, praying the Morning Prayer at the bank of River Jhelum. Rinchana goes to him, asks him questions, and once satisfied by the answers, embraces Islam.²⁹ Around fifty years later, born in 1377 A D, Nooruddin Rishi, a mystic, is initially mentored by Laleshwari, a Brahmin woman, who “after much suffering at the hands of her in-laws, rebelled and became a mystic, preaching oneness of God and arguing against the ancient Hindu caste system.” Later Nooruddin Rishi meets with Muhammad Hamdan, a Sufi from Iran, and both then focus on social reform, being critical of both “orthodox Muslim priests and the Brahmins for reducing religion to empty rituals.”³⁰ These cosmopolitan and feminist features of this land, where a Muslim saint is taught by a Brahmin woman, are environmentally ethical because of being environmentally balanced.

Multi-religious Facets of Kashmir and Brutalities Rendered to its Milieu: An Eco-postcolonial Concern

These myths of modern-day war on terror are busted when we come across a similar, *de facto* account of Geelani’s life. In Hakeem’s book mentioned above, he notes how Syed Ali Geelani’s young mind was nourished in a multicultural and multireligious environment, by his Hindu teacher, Master Nitayanand, well versed in Urdu, Arabic, Persian, and other languages. However, Geelani’s wise and pragmatic approach to face the challenges “with patience and perseverance” was ill used by “Muslim puppet”³¹ of a ruler like Sheikh Abdullah. Hakeem graphically narrates how Abdullah’s overly secularized policies make him declare his pledges with Pandit Nehru, as early as 1948, of bequeathing

29 Peer, *Curfewed Night*, 182.

30 Peer, *Curfewed Night*, 180-181.

31 Hakeem, *Paradise on Fire*, 28, 23.

Kashmir to India, and getting the reward of staying in power for burying the demand for plebiscite. He narrates the Indian policies of subjecting “inhuman and brutal torture” to whosoever raised his voice against these betrayals. According to Hakeem, Sheikh Abdullah’s soiled hands with the “custodial killings,”³² is something, which stands in diametrical opposition to Geelani’s ideologically idealistic stance of enabling the people of Kashmir for their right of plebiscite.

Hakeem’s argument gets strengthened when we see these words of a leading Indian sociologist, Ashis Nandy, in *The Hindustan Times*:

During the last century [the] most atrocious cruelty has been committed *not* in the name of religion (though we might like to believe that) but in the name of reason and aesthetics. And secular states have killed more people than non-secular states.³³

Nandy’s words belie the pervasive narrative of India about Kashmir. It is not waging any war on terror in Kashmir, rather it is the legacy of rulers like Gulab Singh which is being carried out by the modern-day Kar Sevaks.

What else may be expected when we see this neocolonialism’s resolve to annihilate the living population of this land? Yasmin Khan, an Associate Professor of History and Fellow of Kellogg College, University of Oxford writes about M. S. Golwalker, “leader of the RSS, [who] wrote warmly of the Third Reich.” She quotes Golwalker:

To keep the purity of the Race and its culture, Germany shocked the world by her purging the country of the Semitic Races—the Jews. Race pride at its highest has been manifested here. Germany has also shown how well-nigh impossible it is for Races and cultures, having differences going to the root to be assimilated into one united whole, a good lesson for us in Hindusthan to learn and profit by.³⁴

32 Hakeem, *Paradise on Fire*, 29-40.

33 Hakeem, *Paradise on Fire*, xiii.

34 Yasmin Khan, *The Great Partition: The Making of India and Pakistan* (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 2007, 2017), 52.

It is not difficult to put two and two together when we come across such declarations by the usurpers and occupational forces.

These modern-day Islamophobes seem to put such fact under erasure that an Indian Emperor, Ashoka in the B.C. period, not only renounces bloodshed but becomes a Buddhist, while due to the peaceful influence of Islam, Rinchana, a Tibetan prince becomes a Muslim in the 14th Century, and Balbir Singh embraces Islam in 20th Century. It is this peaceful understanding of Islam that many writers like Peer advocate as opposed to the tale of bloodshed, dispossession, marginalization, loss of life, and erasure that we are witnessing in a post-revocation period of Kashmir.

Contemporary Literature

Memoirs,³⁵ petit memoirs, anthologies,³⁶ novels and short stories,³⁷ historical writings, and political criticisms³⁸ record how the recent historic appropriation of land starts with (seriously questionable) accession of Hari Singh with his decision “to join India.” Sheikh Abdullah supports this decision because of his friendship with Nehru, but instead of giving the much-sought Kashmir’s “autonomy,”³⁹ it is “eroded” with “Indian installed puppet rulers” that catapults into total disregard of any cosmopolitanism that this land is known for. Like historians quoted above, writers like Peer are also highly critical of this marionette factor of Sheikh Abdullah’s signing a “compromise with the Indian government” giving up “the demand for the plebiscite that the UN had recommended” with the usual bounty of his

35 See Peer’s *Curfewed Night* and Iftikhar Geelani’s *My Days in Prison*.

36 See works of Pankaj Mishra, Fahad Shah, Suvir Kaul, Sanjay Kak, and Arundhati Roy.

37 See works of Shahnaz Bashir, *The Half Mother* (Hachette, 2014); and *Scattered Souls* (Fourth Estate, 2016).

38 See William E. Baker, Alastair Lamb, Victoria Schofield, Arundhati Roy, Muhamad Junaid, Hafsa Kanjwal, and Sumantra Bose among others.

39 Peer, *Curfewed Night*, 13.

spending “the remaining years of his life in power.”⁴⁰ This political and monetary reward was an incentive enough in this “trusted old political football” of Kashmir as Roy puts it.⁴¹ And, as Curtin notes that “capitalism is a dynamic system. Its health requires constant expansion to include new markets and new access to resources. A fire without fuel quickly dies.”⁴² Therefore, many historians and writers disapprove Sheikh Abdullah’s political maneuvers for his capitalistic gains (as mentioned above). Factors like Sheikh Abdullah have been providing diverse kinds of fuels to the fires of capitalism and colonialism for their own capitalistic gains. He is one of the many examples of a comprador class who, being “internal colonialists,”⁴³ are perhaps more ruthless than the actual colonialists. Their policies seem to support the legacy of reigns of terror and deception which have resulted in this Indian war of terror on innocent Kashmiri civilians.

Many books of impartial writers⁴⁴ inform about many instances like *de jure* “direct Indian military intervention in the State of Jammu & Kashmir” as early as May 5, 1947 with the result that when “India overtly intervened in Kashmir on October 27, the Maharaja of Patiala lost no time in joining his men, some already in the field in Jammu and Kashmir.”⁴⁵

40 Peer, *Curfewed Night*, 14. Same argument is made at several places by several scholars. See, for instance, Hafsa Kanjwal, “The Story of Kashmir and Its People: Beyond the Metanarrative of Political Conflict,” *Economic and Political Review* LIII no. 42 (2018): 21-23. https://www.academia.edu/37642883/The_Story_of_Kashmir_and_Its_People_Beyond_the_Metanarrative_of_Political_Conflict

41 Roy, *Capitalism: A Ghost Story*, 90.

42 Deane Curtin, *Environmental Ethics for a Postcolonial World* (Lanham, Boulder, New York, Toronto, Oxford: Rowman & Littlefield Publishers, Inc, 2005), 21.

43 Rob Nixon, “Environmentalism and Postcolonialism” in *Postcolonialism and Beyond*. eds. A. Loomba *et al.*, (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2005), 234.

44 See for instance the books of Lamb, works of historians like William W. Baker, Josef Korbel, and written records of British Foreign Office Indian Independence Partition sources, Sumantra Bose, and Victoria Schofield, among many others.

45 Lamb, *Incomplete Partition*, 130-131.

Thus, the appropriation of land, resources, and Kashmiri life is a phenomenon that commenced even before partition. It is now a historically recorded fact that Jammu massacre in September 1947 “happened just five days before Pakistan irregulars’ attack in J & K, and nine days before the Maharaja accession to India.” Ian Stephens, an editor of *The Statesman*, suggests that the large-scale massacre of Muslims happened with the approval of Maharaja Hari Singh.⁴⁶ Many other writers question the subsuming of the brutal massacres carried out by the Indian forces under the rhetoric of “War on Terror.” In an anthology by Mishra, Roy, and other writers, Tariq Ali’s mention of the invitation of the Israeli military officers “to visit Akhnur military base in the province and advise on counter-terrorism measures,”⁴⁷ reminds of the *de jure* accomplice between India and Israel that Sumantra Bose writes in his book, *Contested Lands: Israel-Palestine, Kashmir, Bosnia, Cyprus, and Sri Lanka*.⁴⁸

Stating the Environmental Ethics: A Step towards Peace and Justice for Kashmir

One example of exposé of this colonial-imperialism aka war on terror may be seen in India Today Conclave, India's biggest platform where business leaders, politicians, thinkers, and icons from every field come together to explore and exchange ideas. In its 2017 platform it was a debate on Kashmir, titled, Kashmir: What Next? On this platform this year, the Kashmiri leader, Syed Ali Shah Geelani gave answers to the slander and vitriol levelled against him by

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- 46 Umer Beigh, “The Massacre that Widened the Communal Gap,” *News Click*, Nov 4, 2017. Accessed April 23, 2019. <https://www.newsclick.in/massacre-widened-communal-gap#:~:text=No%20less%20than%20%2C00%2C000,abducted%2C%20and%20many%20were%20raped.&text=In%20South%20Asia%2C%20the%20most,genocide%20is%20the%20Jammu%20massacre>.
- 47 Tariq Ali, “Afterword: Not Crushed, Merely Ignored” in *Kashmir: The Case for Freedom* (London, New York: Verso, 2011), 133.
- 48 Sumantra Bose, *Contested Lands: Israel-Palestine, Kashmir, Bosnia, Cyprus, and Sri Lanka*. (Cambridge, Massachusetts, London, England: Harvard University Press, 2007), 168.

none other than Farooq Abdullah,⁴⁹ the legendary example of Indian ventriloquism. Geelani spoke about the majority sentiment which disputed this puppet rule as early as October 1947. He reminded the audience of the promises Nehru made in the Lal Chowk of Srinagar of taking back Indian army and giving right of plebiscite. Geelani told the audience about India's interior minister stating Kashmir problem as a series of broken promises. The hoax of this supposed war on terror is a recent Indian lexis after 2001. Earlier it would situate what is happening in Kashmir as occurring on behalf of Pakistani meddling only. This ruse of war on terror, therefore, gets exposed when we see how Geelani spoke of seven hundred thousand (7 lac) army making Kashmir a region with the biggest army concentration around the globe, with one hundred and fifty thousand (1.5 lac) armoured police. Even the Village Defense Committees (VDCs) are given guns in Kashmir for 13 million people in Kashmir. Where, Roy, in her usual brilliant questioning way asks the same question: "Six hundred thousand actively deployed armed personnel for a population of ten million people"?⁵⁰

Geelani's telling the audience that it has been an army occupation and oppression since 1947 breaks the myths of war on terror and shows Indian occupation's colonial-imperialist teeth. The land appropriation may be seen when more than two hundred eighty thousand (280,000) canal land been confiscated by the Indian occupying forces. The bunkers in the forests of Shopian District are supplied with five thousand two hundred (5200) sawing machines, with which around three to four million (30-40 lac) trees in Shopian district alone are expected to be sawed down, while, the furniture being made is supplied to many officials.⁵¹ Kunal Mukherjee gives a more detailed account in

49 The biggest partisan of the Indian establishment like his father. Roy writes how he seconds and justifies their every move. See *Capitalism* for details.

50 Roy, *Capitalism: A Ghost Story*, 58.

51 *India Today Conclave, Dr. Farooq Abdullah Speaks on Indian Democracy And Kashmir Issue*, Feb 27, 2017 Accessed Oct 14, 2018.

his otherwise invidious analysis in his paper.⁵² According to him, the security personnel lacked professionalism and therefore, could not control and correct the situation. He believes that in addition to instilling fear in the hearts and minds of the local people, the presence of such a big army in the region has a detrimental impact on the region's ecology. He writes:

Forests, for instance, have been cut and the wood obtained is being sold illegally on a large scale by the security forces. The barren mountains testify to this. Senior officials prefer the walnut tree in order to get the renowned carved furniture through local craftsmen, who mostly have to work free for the army. Local people talk about how the officers carried back truckloads of such furniture when their term came to an end in Kashmir.⁵³

Mukherjee's quote is a testimony to what Geelani spoke at this forum in 2017. It also makes us recall the same history stated by Robert Thorpe and T. G. Vigne about the colonial-imperialism of the Dogra rule. Is it colonial-imperialism, or can we neologize it as implonialism because of the magnitude of the damage it is causing for the Kashmiri life and property? The blatant disregard for any accountability of these actions akin to herrenvolk make this phenomenon more than colonial-imperialism and may be termed as implonialism.

This colonial-imperialism becomes evident when we see Geelani numerates figures. He tells that in the last 20 years, one hundred thousand (1 lac) people have been murdered, while in 1947, two hundred and fifty thousand people (2.5 lac) were gathered and massacred in the Jammu region after giving them the false promise of sending them to Pakistan. While the unofficial figure of massacred figure was five hundred thousand (5 lac) that changed the demography

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=frm110kD5gs&ab_channel=IndiaTodayConclave

52 Kunal Mukherjee, "Comparing India's Disputed Borderlands: Kashmir and the Northeast," *Jadavpur Journal of International Relations* 18, no. 1 (2014). <https://doi.org/10.1177/0973598414552749>

53 Mukherjee. "Comparing India's Disputed Borderlands," 51.

of the Jammu region entirely. He tells the audience, and the virtual world, that in the last 20 years alone, one hundred thousand (1 lac) people migrated, sixty (60) thousand women were raped, 8-10 thousand are missing persons, one hundred thousand (1 lac) young people have been tortured. He also spoke of the promotions of the personnel of CRPF, BSF, or Regular Army, if they kill. They get promotions before even his dead body is picked up, and these interpellations are accompanied by the added cruelty of maiming the killed as militants.⁵⁴

Geelani also tells this audience, that according to very cautious official estimates, there are 50 thousand orphans, 30 thousand widows, 2700 unmarked graves,⁵⁵ which is also now quoted as 6277,⁵⁶ 1000 half widows in Muslim majority part of Kashmir. He also points out that there are one hundred thousand (1 lac) people homeless in Delhi; in 2005 UN survey report, 25 hundred thousand (25 lac) people dying of hunger, and 40 percent of people living under poverty line. The panel on the stage were too uneasy with Geelani's pointing out these pressing lapses on the part of the government. And lastly, he tells that even though there have been peaceful demonstrations, in 2008, 200 people, and in 2010, 1117 people were murdered, with several dying, tortured, and maimed every day. These were some of the facts that Geelani could put across to the audience making a humanitarian appeal to them to understand the ramification of this occupation on the land, life, property, and environment of Kashmir.⁵⁷ These were some ethical statements of facts and one way to state the environmental

54 Conclave, 2017.

55 Human Rights Commission was finally shamed into officially acknowledging the existence of twenty-seven hundred unmarked graves from three districts in Kashmir, see Roy, 60.

56 Shubh Mathur, *The Human Toll of the Kashmir Conflict: Grief and Courage in a South Asian Borderland* (Hampshire, New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2016), 130.

57 Conclave, 2017.

ethics of this realm. According to the Kashmir Wala news desk report:

As per the Annual Report (2017-18) released by the Ministry of Home Affairs (MHA), the year 2017 witnessed a 6.21 percent increase in the militancy incidents, while as [sic] 166.66 percent increase in the fatalities of civilians in comparison to corresponding period of 2016.⁵⁸

The question is: Is this war on terror or *war of terror*? We leave it for our readers to decide!

Conclusion

This paper has endeavoured to examine the implications of the narrative of Global War on Terror (GWOT) which seems to be a war of terror against a postcolonial space like Kashmir. The manifestation of GWOT in different periods of history with the starting point of Kashmir's medieval period, Dogras, and to the present times seems to speak about a pre-decided acrimony due to a constructed "mythology of Kashmir dispute." This war of terror is a direct result of a "come what may" stance adopted by some 'know all, tell all' crafters of Kashmir imbroglio, as Lamb puts it. In the wake of the magnitude of the damage this global war of terror is causing to the Kashmiri life and property, it seems to be an extension of a colonial-imperialism, neologized as implonialism (mentioned above). This implonialism, therefore, may be used as an alternate term for this war of terror which blatantly disregards any accountability for its actions and is akin to herrenvolk. Stating the environmental ethics of this realm is one way that may determine a future course of action *viz-a-viz* Kashmir and bring forth the need for expressing the resistance against the oppression of colonizing powers in this postcolonial age. Through this eco-postcolonial historiographic study of Kashmir, the ruse of so-

58 The Kashmir Wala. In 2017, 166% rise in civilian killings in J-K, says MHA repor, Dec 16, 2018. Accessed Dec 15, 2018, The Kashmir Wala: <https://thekashmirwalla.com/2018/12/in-2017-166-rise-in-civilian-killings-in-j-k-says-mha-report/>

called global war on terror is seen as a colonial-imperialism and a war of terror.