

INTRODUCTION

“Rebels of the Streets”

Violence, Protest, and Freedom in Kashmir

MONA BHAN, HALEY DUSCHINSKI, AND ATHER ZIA

I'm the rebel of the streets that been eulogized in blood
Dramatized in politics duly hated with no love
Demonized in the news with their fabricated tales
While sodomized young kids are still screaming in their jails

Lost and never found in this facade of peace
Reflected in thoughts, that Dajjal¹ now breathes
He speaks to his puppets and silhoets now tremble
'Cause the brave men are dead and all cowards resemble

Satan's evil empire is reaching out to hold thee
Since money can buy out your political theory
And your unborn child, is raised as a traitor
Livin' on blood money and he doubts his Creator

Misled by his greed till his soul starts to blacken
And he sees his own face in the signs of Armageddon
And this earth will shake 'cause of the crimes he did
His bones will break holdin' the coffin of his Kid

They gave us blood and hate then wondered why we all
are rebels

In the Land of Saints each man raised is called a rebel

—MC Kash, *Why We Rebels*

“Rebel of the streets”: These powerful lyrics by Kashmiri rapper MC Kash reflect a new phase in the politics of dissent in Kashmir, shaped by a long-standing popular struggle against India’s brutal military occupation that has dominated the cultural, social, and political landscape of the region for decades. Since India’s independence from British colonial rule and the subsequent partition in 1947, India and Pakistan, both of which claim sovereign control over the region, have fought four inconclusive wars over Kashmir. In Indian-administered Kashmir, a series of forced, rigged, and illegitimate elections have installed what MC Kash refers to as “puppet” regimes that have constrained expressions of people’s will for Kashmir’s political resolution while completely ignoring a series of United Nations (UN) resolutions for a free and fair plebiscite to settle the Kashmir dispute. Reinforced by Indian military’s ubiquitous presence in Kashmir, the locally elected governments have turned Kashmir into a “late modern colonial occupation” in which state violence is obscured and justified through claims of humanitarianism premised on principles of democracy, good governance, development, and rule of law (Mbembe 2003, 25–30).

In 1989 Kashmiris, long resistant to Indian rule in their homeland, launched a popular armed rebellion against the Indian state. India sought to crush the rebellion through a massive counterinsurgency assault against insurgent and civilian populations, deploying more than 700,000 military and paramilitary forces in the region. More than 25 years later this counterinsurgency regime remains, producing a perpetual state of siege that subjects the entire population to everyday conditions of surveillance, punishment, and control. With a population of approximately 12.5 million, Jammu and Kashmir has 1 soldier for every 17 Kashmiris, making it one of the most densely militarized zones in the world (International People’s Tribunal on Human Rights and Justice in Indian-Administered Kashmir and Association of Parents of Disappeared Persons 2015).² Indian military, police, and paramilitary forces carry out extrajudicial killings, arbitrary detentions, enforced disappearances, torture, and sexual assault. These operations have been facilitated by emergency and national security laws such as the Armed Forces Special Powers Act (AFSPA), which gives the military supreme powers to kill with impunity (Amnesty International 1999), and the J&K Public Safety Act, which provides for preventive detention without trial (Amnesty International 2001, 2011a, 2011b). International and Kashmiri human rights organizations document that more than 70,000 people have been killed and over 8,000 have been forcibly disappeared in counterinsurgency operations, and there are around 6,000

unknown and unmarked graves and mass graves in Kashmir (International People's Tribunal on Human Rights and Justice in Indian-Administered Kashmir and Association of Parents of Disappeared Persons 2015).

The armed rebellion transformed into a new mode of resistance in the first decade of the twenty-first century, with widespread anti-India street protests marking the beginning of a new intifada (Kak 2011). Clashes between youth protesters and state armed forces escalated in the summer of 2010, with Indian state armed forces killing 120 civilians, a period marked in Kashmiri consciousness as "the year of killing youth" (Bukhari 2010).³ These young men and women, also called "Kashmir's new warriors" (Thottam 2010), continued a long-standing struggle against what they viewed as the illegitimacy of India's "evil empire" through new modes of protest and resistance, marshaling strategies of artistic and literary representation, documentary film production, music, sit-ins, candlelight vigils, street marches, and stone pelting, in an effort to secure their aspiration for a free (*azad*) Kashmir. These popular modes of protest—in which music and literature as well as jokes, rumors, and stone-pelting become potent forms of political dissent—are derived from, not a departure from, the armed struggle of the 1990s; they are part of a longer continuum of antioccupation struggles that can be traced to India's historic denial of the Kashmiri right to self-determination, traced even to the violent repression of Kashmiri uprisings against the tyranny of the princely ruler in 1931 (Faheem, this volume). Viewed along this continuum, the protests of the 2000s resist any attempt to draw easy distinctions between violent and nonviolent forms of resistance. MC Kash burst onto the cultural scene during this critical time as a popular and powerful voice of defiance, giving expression to the cumulative rage of these "rebels of the streets" who came of age during the armed rebellion of the 1990s. Building on new social media and solidarity networks, MC Kash rose to prominence early in the summer months of 2010 with his song *I Protest (Remembrance)*, which bears witness to the indiscriminate killings of teenagers by the state's armed forces: "Don't talk restitution / 'Cuz the only solution / Is the resolution of freedom." Drawing links with other occupied and oppressed populations in Palestine, Northern Ireland, and elsewhere, MC Kash's rap music has given voice to a new generation that has pursued the freedom movement through hybrid forms of opposition, combining local poetry, art, fiction, and literature with global models of cultural production and resistance.⁴

Kashmiris have consistently challenged—both through armed and unarmed resistance—widespread attempts by sections of the Indian media,

academia, and civil society to frame India's brutal military occupation as a democracy. In one example, in 2013 the state government hosted the Zubin-Mehta-led Bavarian State Orchestra for a program titled *Ehsaas-e-Kashmir* (Feeling for Kashmir). Organized by the German embassy, this event aimed to reach "the hearts of the Kashmiris with a message of hope and encouragement" (see Bukhari 2013). Kashmiri civil society and profreedom groups opposed the event on the grounds that it provided a platform for the state to obfuscate the occupation and appropriate the traumatic narrative of violent tragedies that had befallen Kashmiris. In protest, civil society groups organized a street concert called *Haqeeqat-e-Kashmir* (Reality of Kashmir) to showcase people's memories of the occupation through art and music.

Cultural productions such as MC Kash's music, *Haqeeqat-e-Kashmir*, and the many forms of literary and artistic expression emerging from Kashmir today perform important political and historic work.⁵ They build critical consciousness among Kashmiris about radically new approaches to writing history so that the state's efforts to silence alternative narratives of Kashmir's long and complex history of occupation, in which only hegemonic forms of history and memory were allowed to thrive, can be countered. Such "popular and expressive culture(s)" of resistance are deeply political and provide a rich ethnographic window to track and understand the multiple "logics of occupation" (Visweswaran 2013, 3). At the same time, new forms of protest in Kashmir exceed their political framing and outcomes and force consideration of the ways in which cultural expressions work as forms of memory making, enabling a reclamation of lost histories while also empowering a younger generation of Kashmiris to defy state-scripted formations of Kashmiri political and cultural identities. At once creative and generative, cultural productions, which combine local and nonlocal elements from music, art, film, and literature, forge a larger culture of resistance in which poetry as much as politics provides tools to mourn death, celebrate Kashmiri martyrdom, and energize the fight against India's occupation of Kashmir (see Faheem, this volume; Kaul 2015).

Despite such dramatic transformations in the cultural and political landscape of Kashmir in which new articulations of protest and resistance became commonplace, no serious scholarship exists on this critical period and its implications for Kashmiris on either side of the heavily militarized Line of Control between India and Pakistan. Located at this critical juncture in the Kashmiri struggle, this volume engages with the current collective work of creativity and witnessing enacted by a young generation of Kashmiris who are giving voice to their rebellion. This collection brings together young

Kashmiri and non-Kashmiri scholars from various disciplinary backgrounds who have conducted extensive fieldwork during the past decade in various regions of Kashmir. Through ethnographically informed analyses, the volume presents new ways of thinking and writing about Kashmir that cross conventional borders and point toward alternative ways of conceptualizing the past, present, and future of Kashmir.

Mapping Space and Territory

The undivided territory of the original princely state of Kashmir exists today as a powerful ground for Kashmiri collective identity, an imaginary homeland remembered in the past and also projected into the future. Kashmiri American poet Agha Shahid Ali expresses nostalgic longing for this lost utopia in his most well-known poem, *Country Without a Post Office*: “Let me cry out in that void, say it as I can / I write on that void: Kashmir, Kaschmir, Cashmere, Qashmir, Cashmir, Cashmire, Kashmere” (1998, 3). Today, India and Pakistan exert their competing claims over Kashmir through cartographic representations that obscure the violent divisions of Kashmiri territory enacted through a series of four border wars between the two rival nation-states since 1947. After the first Kashmir war of 1947–1948, a UN-brokered agreement created a 435-mile cease-fire line that arbitrarily split Kashmir between India and Pakistan. Renamed the Line of Control (LoC) after India and Pakistan’s third war in 1971, this de facto international border separates Kashmir into Azad Jammu and Kashmir and the northern territories of Gilgit and Baltistan, administered by Pakistan, and the State of Jammu and Kashmir (J&K), administered by India.⁶ On the Indian side of the LoC, J&K includes the provinces of Kashmir Valley, Jammu, and Ladakh, which are inhabited by multiple ethnic, linguistic, and religious groups. Kashmir is predominantly Sunni Muslim, Jammu is primarily Hindu, and Ladakh has a mixed population of Buddhists and Shia Muslims. Along with religious differences, communities across the state speak multiple languages and dialects that shape its complex diversity. For example, Ladakhis speak Balti, Purgi, or Brogskad; Hindus and Muslims in Jammu both speak Dogri; and Kashmiris, both Kashmiri Muslims and Hindu Pandits, speak the Kashmiri language of Koshur.⁷

Over the years, the diversity of the state has been heavily politicized through selective patronage and regional biases in development and governance mechanisms, a policy that local governments have actively pursued

to fragment communities in order to stall Kashmir's political resolution and perfect the colonial strategy of divide and rule. For instance, Buddhist Lada-khis led a mass agitation for Union Territory status in 1995 on the grounds that they were excluded from spheres of development and governance in the state (van Beek 2000). In Kargil, a district of Ladakh that is dominated by Shia Muslims, Buddhist demands for Union Territory status are seen as a politico-religious maneuver by the Buddhist leadership to further divide the state on the basis of region and religion. In Kargil, communities have long demanded a porous border with Pakistan for trade relations and for reuniting with their extended kin and families. Kargilis celebrate their conjoined histories with Pakistan and Central Asia through memorialization projects such as art, poetry, and museums in which old connections are resurrected, and Kargil, contrary to its dominant representations as a remote frontier, is celebrated for its rich past as a trading entrepôt on the ancient silk route.

While visions of Kashmir's alternative political futures might vary, it is clear that ethnic and religious communities in the state have suffered from the Indian government's lack of political commitment to resolve the long-standing dispute. Kashmir has repeatedly been used as a political tool to shore up nationalist sentiments in both India and Pakistan, and years of cross-border wars and conflict have rendered the lives of people across the LoC both precarious and unstable. Amid such social and political uncertainties, the government, as several chapters in this volume show, has played a critical role in further fragmenting communities and fomenting interreligious unrest and anxieties.

Occupation as an Object of Cultural Analysis

Within the context of this modern history of division and warfare, India and Pakistan refuse to acknowledge Kashmiris' alternative memories of the past and aspirations for independent nationhood. In the national narratives of Pakistan and India, Kashmir exists as an undivided space claimed by each side. In Pakistan, Kashmir is seen as the "jugular vein" providing life to the nation, while the LoC is viewed as a provisional border that severs Muslim communities across Kashmir and Pakistan.⁸ Pakistanis identify portions of Kashmir under Indian rule as *maqbooza* (occupied) Kashmir, a claim that explicitly points to the provisionality of Kashmir's accession to India, reminding India and the world at large about the long-forgotten promise of a free and

fair plebiscite for Kashmiris. Pakistan’s official policy recognizes Kashmir’s disputed status, although many in Kashmir view Pakistani support for the UN-mandated referendum as conditional (Ali 2013; Junaid 2016). Pakistani leaders do not support independence for Kashmir as much as they desire Kashmir’s merger with Pakistan (Junaid 2016; see Mahmud, this volume). At the same time, Pakistani political leaders and military officials have often consolidated their power by using Kashmir to mobilize public support for militarized nationalism (Ali 2013; see Mahmud, this volume). As Ershad Mahmud (this volume) argues, the military has been a major stakeholder in Pakistani-administered Azad Kashmir since 1947 largely because World War II Muslim veterans from the maharaja-controlled western Jammu provinces of Poonch and Mirpur played a significant part in Azad Kashmir’s creation. Building on Snedden’s (2012) important historic work, Mahmud writes that political discontent escalated against the maharaja prior to the maharaja’s signing of the instrument of accession with India in 1947. During this period, war veterans from Poonch and Mirpur organized a pro-Pakistan armed rebellion against the maharaja, “spontaneously assembling under the name of ‘Azad Kashmir Regular Forces’” and forming the provisional government of *azad* Kashmir. The Pakistani military continues to exert its dominance over local society and politics more than seventy years later. Contrary to dominant narratives that trace the inception of the first India-Pakistan war to Pakistani incursions into Kashmir, both Snedden and Mahmud illustrate the role that indigenous uprisings by Poonchis and Mirpuris played in shaping significant historical events in Kashmir, from the beginning of the first Indo-Pakistani war to the subsequent drawing of the UN-brokered cease-fire line, now the LoC.

Despite such historical accounts of the role of local uprisings in substantially shaping the trajectory of the Kashmir conflict, nationalist narratives in India represent the LoC as a brutal reminder of Pakistan’s transgressions into Kashmiri territory in 1947, when Pakistan seized portions of Kashmiri territory forcefully, triggering the first India-Pakistan war and the world’s most drawn-out border conflict. Indian explanations of preaccession events in Kashmir have consistently denied the role of local Kashmiri state subjects, a position of convenience that pins the blame of the conflict squarely on Pakistan and enables India to “mask” its “repressive practices,” which it has routinely used since 1947 to subjugate Kashmiri aspirations for *azadi* (see Kazi, this volume).⁹ Even today, every time Kashmiris rebel against India, India’s mainstream media reduces Kashmiri resistance to the handiwork of external forces from across the border rather than recognizing the local origins of the

movement. In large part this is because successive Indian administrations have viewed Kashmir as an integral part of India—referred to in nationalist slogans as Bharat's *atoot ang*—and have pursued extreme measures, including force and coercive diplomacy, to ensure that Kashmir stays with India.

Given its disputed histories and undecided futures, Kashmir remains an “administered territory” under Indian and Pakistani rule. As the chapters of this volume demonstrate, the term “administration” visibilizes the provisional nature of Kashmir's accession to Indian rule while also recognizing that the right to self-determination applies to Kashmiri populations on both sides of the contested LoC in India as well as in Pakistan. In India, however, use of the term “administered” for Kashmir is not considered a neutral designation by government agencies that actively prevent Kashmir's representation in maps and other forms of visual media as a divided territory between India and Pakistan, punishing those who refuse to comply with statist depictions of space, place, and history (DNA 2016). In May 2011, the Indian government censored the *Economist* magazine by placing white stickers over a map of Kashmir in nearly 30,000 published copies of the magazine simply because the map showed the region divided among India, Pakistan, and China (Figure 1). India's refusal to acknowledge the very fact of disputation shows that India considers Kashmir's accession to be absolute and final. It also constitutes an exercise of cartographic power. Only the Indian state, it seems, has the power to represent Kashmir as it sees fit.

Likewise, legal and political claims that foreground India's occupation of Kashmir are considered unpatriotic and silenced by the Indian government. In November 2010, prominent Indian novelist and human rights activist Arundhati Roy faced the threat of arrest by the New Delhi police on sedition charges because she publicly claimed at a conference in New Delhi that Kashmir was never “an integral part of India.” In response to the filing of the police report, Roy said, “Anybody who cares to read the transcripts of my speeches will see that they were fundamentally a call for justice. I spoke about justice for the people of Kashmir who live under one of the most brutal military occupations in the world” (Nelson 2010). Several other public figures who have dared to challenge India's “obsession with narrative control” over Kashmir (Waheed 2014b) have been denied entry into India.¹⁰

The premise of this volume is that the Indian occupation of Kashmir operates as much through electoral democracy as it does through intensive militarization and institutionalized impunity that structures the conditions, possibilities, priorities, and life trajectories of Kashmiris inside and outside of

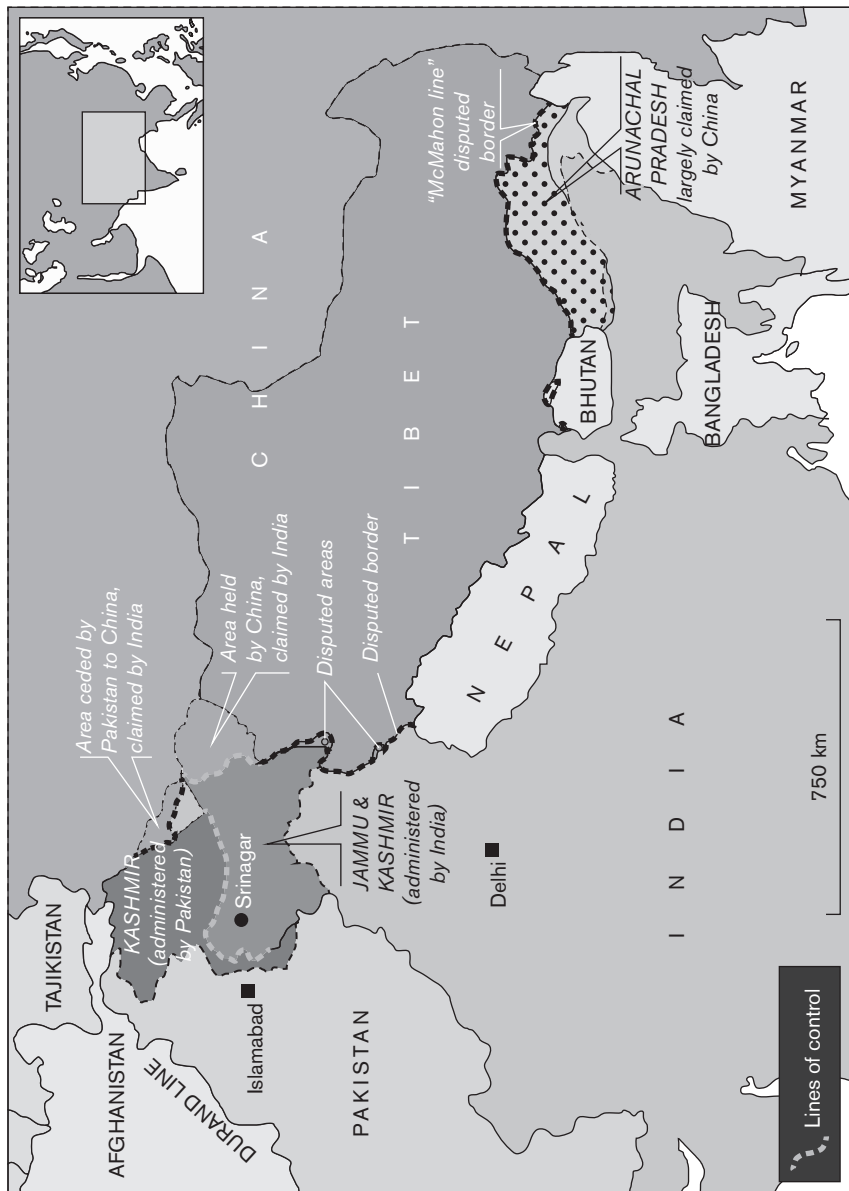


FIGURE 1. Contested map of India, Pakistan, and Kashmir. Credit: *The Economist*.

the valley. In this sense, the volume traces the linkages among colonialism, militarization, power, democracy, and sovereignty and how these play out through control strategies that dominate occupied landscapes. Rather than analyze the Indian occupation of Kashmir strictly through definitions and frameworks of international law, we examine what Adam Roberts refers to as the “process” of occupation that is context specific and cannot be reduced to a singular “character and purpose” (Roberts 1984, 251). Given the many different forms that the phenomenon of occupation may take, the chapters in this volume apply a holistic and comparative ethnographic perspective to shed light on whether and how occupation emerges as a distinct object of cultural analysis—a structure of feeling produced by and through law.

Since the nineteenth century, occupation law, considered a branch of international humanitarian law, has sought to regulate state activities—particularly the activities of armed forces—in relation to the inhabitants of foreign territories on which they have no sovereign title. In the classic formulation, occupation is defined as “the effective control of a foreign territory by hostile armed forces,” with occupation law “provid[ing] the legal framework for the temporary exercise of authority by the occupant, striking a balance between the occupier’s security needs and the interests of the ousted authority as well as those of the local population” (International Committee of the Red Cross 2012). However, the recent worldwide rise in extraterritorial military interventions has prompted international legal scholars to rethink some of the fundamental assumptions about occupation and the forms that it takes amid contemporary global political arrangements (Boon 2008). Although the law of occupation initially grew out of the notion of law of war, it now recognizes that occupation does not necessarily result from actual fighting; it can also result from the threat of use of force, from an armistice agree, from a peace agreement, or from other processes through which a territory comes under the control of a foreign state (Benvenisti 2013). For De Matos and Ward (2012), military occupation must also include cases of forced interventions and annexation of territories, peacekeeping efforts, and the establishment of long-term military bases.

Apart from the legal scholarship that seeks to define occupation more broadly, social scientists too have foregrounded the multiple ways the logics of occupation restructure state society relationships and people’s experiences of normalcy, terror, or violence (see Duschinski and Bhan, 2017). One of the foremost thinkers in this regard is Achilles Mbembe (2003), who builds on the work of Michel Foucault, Frantz Fanon, and other critical

thinkers of the twentieth century to define the work of late modern colonial occupations in the late twentieth and early twenty-first centuries in terms of the restructurings of space, sovereignty, violence, and power. He describes early modern colonial occupation as the act of seizing, delimiting, and asserting control over a physical geographical region, leading to a division of space into compartments, with a proliferation of internal boundaries and frontiers separating populations into discrete and fragmented units, as in the case of the townships of South Africa. Building on these colonial techniques of control, occupation in its late modern form also imposes its power through infrastructure and a particular ordering of space, place, and territory. Mbembe (2003) defines the “specific terror formation” of necropower in late modern colonial occupation through reference to the territorial fragmentation and internal splintering of territory and people (see Junaid 2013).

In Kashmir, the militarized LoC is only one of many borders and boundaries that divide territory, weakening interregional alliances and people’s relationships with their land and resources. In Gurez, a *tehsil* in northern Kashmir located on the LoC, land mines and thick coils of concertina wires coursing across people’s backyards fragment land, making it impossible for humans and cattle to access their fields or pastures. Borders are also established in the cities and villages of Kashmir, where military bunkers, bases, and checkpoints severely limit people’s access and mobility. The “intrinsically asymmetrical relations of power” between the occupier and the occupied manifest themselves through a violent reordering of space and place in which prisons, bunkers, barracks, concertina wires, and checkpoints disrupt civilian movement while enabling new forms of social, political, and territorial control (De Matos and Ward 2012, 4). This produces a very real everyday confinement for Kashmiris, who find themselves trapped inside their homes and neighborhoods during periods of state-imposed curfew, sometimes lasting for weeks at a time. During periods of perceived or anticipated turmoil, the state government restricts travel throughout the valley, limits cell phone and text messaging services, prohibits local cable television, and monitors people’s movements and communications. The hoisting of the Indian flag in Lal Chowk on the annual Independence Day celebrations is a highly militarized affair, with state officials and security forces overseeing the symbolic performance of state power, while Kashmiri civilians across the valley are restricted to their homes with little to no access to communications. Since 2008 the restrictions on communications have extended to social media

networks, with an anxious state arresting and threatening to arrest Kashmiri youths engaging in what the state terms “seditious activity” on Facebook and Twitter. In all of these ways, the state has criminalized various symbolic and cultural expressions of Kashmiri protest and dissent.

At the same time, through special emergency legislation enacted at the national level in 1990, Indian military forces are protected from legal prosecution for abuses of power through *de facto* and *de jure* impunity for their actions, including use of lethal violence against civilian populations, as long as state agents claim that they are exercising violence in order to maintain law and order. In practice, this impunity extends even to cases that could not possibly be linked to the maintenance of law and order such as rape, disappearance, encounter killing, and torture. In 2009, a human rights group revealed the discovery of 2,700 unknown, unmarked, and mass graves across Kashmir that contained more than 2,943 bodies (International People’s Tribunal on Human Rights and Justice in Indian-Administered Kashmir 2009). The graves are believed to contain victims of unlawful killings, enforced disappearances, torture, and other abuses committed by Indian security forces.¹¹ Through these strategies, Kashmir has been rendered a site of confinement, an everyday prison for the people of the valley (Duschinski 2009).

How might the redefinition of land, territory, and confinement shape people’s identities and collective experiences of space and time, and how might pervasive threats of death, detention, and disappearance recalibrate their embodied understandings of the everyday? On one hand, Kashmir is a war zone where civilians are indiscriminately killed or forcibly disappeared and where routine everyday activities of social and cultural interactions are undermined through curfews or shutdowns. During such times, not only is the “familiar” transformed into the “grotesque,” such as cinema halls becoming brutal interrogation centers across the city, but also the strange becomes uncannily familiar (Nordstrom 1997). Since the 1990s, words such as “crackdowns,” “curfews,” “encounters,” “hideouts,” “bombs,” and “Kalashnikovs” (referring to AK-47s) have become part of the Kashmiri lexicon, signaling a new normalcy in which space, place, and language reflect the everyday experience and burden of occupation. And yet, Kashmir is also a theater of democracy in which elections are routinely held to foster the illusion of a representative and legitimate governance. These new expressions of normalcy, both discursive and institutional, shape the everyday—colonizing spaces of sociality and community, remapping time and space, and helping build an illusion of the everyday that is somehow sheltered from the scars of death and violence.

Kashmiris experience the Indian occupation through the death and destruction unleashed by the military's brutal violence over the years while also witnessing the routinized everydayness of coercive democracy, governance, and political participation. The dynamics of occupation and resistance play out across the axis of gender difference. As in other sites of war and occupation, Kashmiri women experience violence and suffering in gendered ways, and they exercise resistance through distinctive and culture-specific modes of identity transformation and collective mobilization (Manecksha 2017). State armed forces employ gender-based and sexualized violence as a weapon of war (Kazi 2011, this volume; Mathur 2012), with limited legal and quasi-legal pathways for justice, accountability, and social healing (Chatterji, Buluswar, and Kaur 2016). Kashmiri scholar Inshah Malik argues that conventional accounts frame Muslim women in Kashmir either as docile and voiceless victims or as militants who have taken up the men's separatist struggle and, in the process, abandoned the cause of women's rights. Focusing on the emergence of new public spaces for the reworking of female agency in the 1980s, Malik argues that Kashmiri Muslim women “have been refashioning notions of self and notions of struggle for political freedom, drawing on elements from within their culture” (2015, 66). In 2016, five young Kashmiri women powerfully countered the state's attempt to erase such sexualized violence from public consciousness by filing Public Interest Litigation to reopen the 1993 case of army mass rape of women in the Kashmiri towns of Kunan and Poshpora. *Do You Remember Kunan Poshpora*, their published account of the case and its role in shaping their own forms of political consciousness, challenges the state by drawing on their personal and collective reflections to trace the many aspect of violence that shape women's lives in Kashmir (Batool et al. 2016).

For De Matos and Ward (2012, 1–2), military occupation is a “time of epistemic rupture” but is also a place that is “somewhere between war and peace.” Their emphasis on the in-betweenness of occupations, their construction as a “place” that is neither at war not at peace, and also their emphasis on its temporality as ruptured time bring to fore the lived experience of military occupations. Robert Souders (2008, 471) uses the concept of “political liminality” in the context of Palestine to characterize the status of a “yet-to-be formed nation-state” that is “neither completely sovereign nor entirely subjugated.” In addition to the intended effects of military occupations that often include nation-building exercises meant to transform the local culture, politics, and economy, the “unintended effects,” the less studied aspects of

military occupations, deserve attention precisely because occupations are not simply “politico-military events but also human and cultural ones” (De Matos and Ward 2012, 4).

Such formulations open space for ethnographic interrogation of how Kashmir’s liminality, in-betweenness, and legal provisionality as an administered territory have shaped people’s subjectivities, rendering the lines between resistance and co-optation, sovereignty and sedition, normalcy and spectacle, and life and death murky and not easily separable. From this perspective, the lived contradictions of an occupying power are hard to miss. In Kashmir, they include infrastructural projects such as rails, roads, and highways built ostensibly to improve people’s mobilities; militarism that comes masked as democracy or development; and humanitarian policies of the state and the military that emphasize compassion and goodwill but seamlessly morph into heartless tactics to kill and exterminate Kashmiris (see Bhan 2014a; Varma, this volume). As India’s international image as a democratic polity became tainted by its violent policies in Kashmir, the right-wing Hindu nationalist Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) government in 2003, headed by Atal Bihari Vajpayee, instituted “humanitarian” policies of development and compassion to transform Kashmiri hearts and minds. In conjunction with Mufti Sayeed’s “healing touch” policy, the “winning hearts and minds” rhetoric treated Kashmiri resistance against Indian rule as a symptom of their widespread alienation, one that could be fixed through an optimal dose of compassion, development, and good governance. The rhetoric of “development” has intensified under the leadership of Narendra Modi, who has already visited the region four times in less than a year promising peace and transformation. Indian policies, however, have done little to undermine the military’s undisputed powers in Kashmir or weaken long-standing struggles and demands for *azadi*. In the meantime, the rhetoric of development and humanitarianism has become an integral part of India’s counterinsurgency strategy, also instituted by the Indian military in its attempts to win over seditious hearts and minds (Bhan 2014b, 2014c, Nabi and Ye 2015; see also Varma, this volume). The military has actively appropriated humanitarianism to strengthen its counterinsurgency war in the region and make inroads into the everyday lives of communities especially in Kashmir’s border areas, where in the absence of other opportunities residents overwhelmingly rely on the military for jobs and employment.

The policies of an occupying state deliberately and in highly structured ways create a population that is dependent on the state, torn between its

subordination to the state and its aspirations for national liberation. Several authors in this volume highlight such contradictions. Haley Duschinski and Bruce Hoffman show how the theater of democracy in Kashmir constitutes a facade of law that obscures state violence even as it facilitates and legitimizes it, giving rise to regimes of institutionalized impunity. In the same vein, Ather Zia shows how the legal constitution of killable Kashmiri bodies is critical for the legitimization of Indian nationhood. As Mona Bhan and Saiba Varma argue, humanistic metaphors to heal landscapes (as Bhan discusses; see also Bhan and Trisal 2017) and “traumatized” people (as Varma discusses) constitute discursive and strategic mechanisms to promote the Indian vision of a violent democracy in which humanism is nothing but a ruse for military impunity. And yet such contradictory legal, political, and cultural practices also confound the neat binary between the oppressor and oppressed, as demonstrated by Gowhar Fazili’s poignant depiction of a Kashmiri policeman who sees himself as a loyal Kashmiri nationalist despite participating in India’s counterinsurgency war against his own people.

The logics and modalities of an occupying state do not always cohere. In Kashmir as in other occupied territories, the repressive state is continually strengthened through fragmented modes of political process. We explore this fundamental contradiction—the attempt to secure people’s allegiance through promises of citizenship, employment, humanitarianism, and good governance while denying their basic freedoms—in the next section. Specifically, we trace them through the logic of Kashmir’s provisional relationship with India, best exemplified by Article 370, a legal statute that both frames and emboldens Kashmir’s legal and historical struggles against India (Noorani 2011).

The Legal and Historical Conditions of Provisionality

Mapping Kashmir requires the use of special language and symbols—nomenclature such as “ceded,” “administered,” and “claimed” and the dotted boundary marking a cease-fire line—as markers of its contested and in-between status. These markers point toward the provisionality, instituted at the time of partition and continuing to this day, that has established the conditions of the long-standing struggle for independence in the region. Kashmir’s provisionality poses a threat to India’s identity as a secular and integrated

nation. However, it also enables India's governance in the region, most notably through Article 370 that establishes the terms of Kashmir's relationship to India by granting a degree of autonomy to the state.

Written into the Constitution of India as a mechanism for guaranteeing the state's relationship to the Indian Union, Article 370 establishes Kashmir's "special status" and is interpreted by many Kashmiris as a critical legal mechanism to ensure the region's exclusive place in India. The article limits the jurisdiction of the Indian Parliament in the state such that laws passed by the Parliament in all areas except defense, communication, finance, and foreign affairs are not applied to the state unless passed by its own government. Article 370 gives the people of the state the right to form their own constituent assembly, draft their own constitution, and choose their own flag. It also establishes a category of "permanent residents," or state subjects, and prohibits any nonresident from purchasing land in the state. Over time, Article 370 has been emptied of its content through a series of presidential orders and Supreme Court judgments—a historical process that legal scholar A. G. Noorani (2011, 303–30) has called "the wreck of Article 370" and Duschinski and Ghosh (2017) have called "occupational constitutionalism." Efforts to analyze and respond to these changes—for example, the State Autonomy Committee 1999 report outlining constitutional developments that have eroded the autonomy of the state and Justice Sagar Ahmad's Working Group on State-Centre relations in 2009—have prompted statewide and national debates.

These debates constitute a space for the enactment of claims and counterclaims over interpretation of law in relation to territory and demography, thereby revealing an array of competing interests around issues of sovereignty, belongingness, and statehood. Such debates are particularly mobilized during periods of national elections. For instance, on the opening day of the spring 2014 nationwide elections for the lower house of Parliament (Lok Sabha), the Hindu nationalist BJP—led by Narendra Modi, who was chief minister of Gujarat during a massacre of over a thousand Muslims in his state in 2002—released its fifty-two-page manifesto including the abrogation of Article 370, alongside a series of other contentious platforms such as the construction of a Ram temple in Ayodhya and the enactment of a Uniform Civil Code, under the guise of national integration. "Jammu and Kashmir was, is and shall remain an integral part of the Union of India," the manifesto claimed. "The territorial integrity of India is inviolable." The BJP's position reflects the more general ideological perspectives embraced by the national defense sector of the Indian state even though the party is

challenged by leaders of Kashmir’s freedom movement.¹² In response to the BJP’s manifesto, Syed Ali Shah Geelani, chairman of the profreedom party All Parties Hurriyat Conference, issued a statement saying “that even if Article 370 has been diluted, its presence in the Indian Constitution vindicates Jammu and Kashmir’s disputed nature.” Jammu and Kashmir Liberation Front (JKLF) leader Yasin Malik also commented that India’s strategy in relation to Kashmir has always been to engage in a “time pass” dialogue. He seemed to be suggesting that political positions and agendas relating to Article 370 were less about open political debate and more about a performance of sovereignty, a tactical strategy of exercising an absolute will over a population unwilling to be ruled by India.

Soon after the 2014 elections, popular outcry erupted when Radha Mohan Singh, a newly elected BJP member of Parliament from Jammu who had just taken up the position of union minister in Prime Minister Modi’s office, announced that there would be a debate over the prime minister’s stand on the repeal of Article 370. The article, he claimed, had established a “psychological barrier” that had done “more harm than good”—suggesting that the legal provision had created an incommensurable divide disabling Kashmir’s full integration with India. By characterizing Article 370 as a “psychological barrier,” Singh pathologized Kashmiri political claims, outlining the dangers posed by the Kashmiri collective psyche to the Indian Union. He continued by saying that “We want to have a debate so that we can convince the unconvinced about the disadvantages of Article 370. We have already begun the process by inviting all stakeholders and tried to interact with several groups. The right to dissent is a constitutional right and we want to explain to the youth what advantages they have been deprived of in comparison to those belonging to other states.” This paternalizing position suggests that Article 370 has alienated Kashmiris in ways that they themselves do not understand. As in its censorship of the map, such performative paternalism reflects an anxious state attempting to attenuate any form of provisionality that has historically characterized Kashmir’s relation to India.

But the Indian state’s position on Article 370 is not as simple as the Hindu nationalist calls for abrogation suggest. Instead, Kashmir’s provisionality allows for the active maintenance of a facade of democracy, the intentional framing of Kashmir as a dangerous border zone and threat to the integrity of the nation, and the continued implementation of laws of exception that establish the foundations for the intensive militarization and concomitant institutionalization of impunity in the region. The region’s quasi-autonomous

status—on the ever-changing slope between independence and integration—enables the state to advance its efforts to claim Kashmir's land, people, and resources in direct and indirect ways (Bhan 2014c).

This facade of democracy in Kashmir emerges in the two political cartoons by Kashmiri artists featured here. Rather than simply critiquing central government attempts to abrogate Article 370, these cartoons foreground the complicity of Kashmiri mainstream politicians in maintaining the structures of occupation in Kashmir. In Mir Suhail's 2014 cartoon (Figure 2), Prime Minister Modi forthrightly calls for the abrogation of Article 370 while Kashmiri mainstream politicians—Farooq Abdullah and Mufti Sayeed, from Kashmir's political parties, the National Conference (NC) and the People's Democratic Party, respectively—engage in doublespeak about their commitment to safeguarding Kashmir's legal autonomy. Bashir Ahmad Bashir (Figure 3) represents Article 370 as a desiccated human skull hidden inside a box, produced as a prop for Kashmiri mainstream politicians to mobilize for garnering popular votes during elections. Similarly, Suhail presents Article 370 embodied in the figure of a vulnerable and distressed Kashmiri man, barefoot in tattered clothing, who stands with one foot in the grave dug by mainstream politicians while political elites determine his destiny, ostensibly



FIGURE 2. Political cartoon on Article 370. Credit: Mir Suhail 2014.

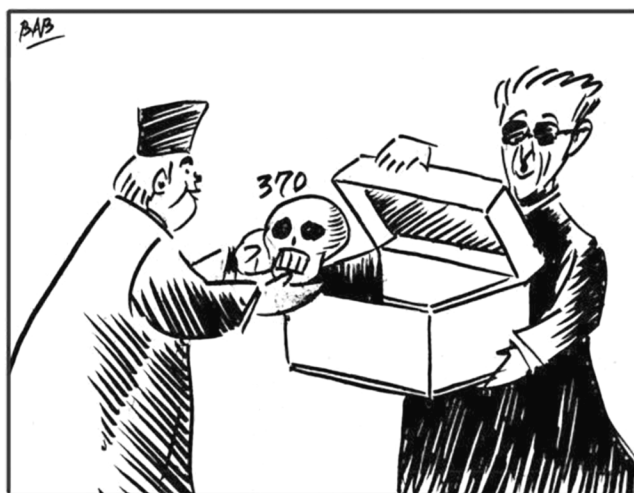


FIGURE 3. Political cartoon on Article 370. Credit: Bashir Ahmed Bashir 2014.

in his own interest. The real issue, these cartoons suggest, is not the empty shell of Article 370 but rather the larger political hypocrisy and violence that it enables. These representations reflect widespread anxieties and mistrust among Kashmiris not about Article 370, but instead about India's efforts to ensure its continuing presence in the region through the complicity, cooperation, and compromise of the political elites. As Kashmiri journalist Iftikhar Gilani (2014) notes, "The argument that Article 370 constitutes a psychological barrier between the governing elite in Delhi and the Kashmiri youths is a false one. The real problem lies in Kashmir's history of rigged elections and foisting unpopular Chief Ministers on the people."

The status quo of provisional status allows India to normalize its routine appropriation of land and resources, masking its work through allusions to economic development, maintenance of law and order, and good governance. In this way, the continuing existence of Article 370 establishes the foundation for the political and legal exceptionality of Kashmir in relation to India, creating space for contradictory modes of rule and governance by the occupying state. Such contradictions make the occupying state even more deceitful for most Kashmiris, who situate India's dual-faced policies within a larger history of unfulfilled promises, in particular the promise of a free and fair plebiscite, and a series of other collective betrayals.

The Plebiscite

Threads of deceit
Woven around a word of plebiscite
By treacherous puppet politicians
Who have no soul inside

—MC Kash, *I Protest*

The claim of Kashmiri self-rule is founded on the legal legitimacy of the demand for a plebiscite. Grounded in several UN resolutions, the Kashmiri demand for a plebiscite and more generally for the right to freedom and self-determination has been frustrated by decades of denial of political will by the Indian government as well as by legal mechanisms of criminalization such as the AFSPA and the J&K Public Safety Act.

The Kashmiri legal claim of self-determination goes back to the legal and political conditions established at the time of independence and partition. The case rests on a series of UN Security Council resolutions beginning with number 38 (1948), which was passed when different parts of the princely state were under military control of India and Pakistan, and reiterated through subsequent resolutions adopted by the newly created UN Commission for India and Pakistan in 1948 and 1949 as well as by the Security Council itself up through 1957. Security Council Resolution 47 (1948) in particular recommends a series of measures to the governments of India and Pakistan to “bring about a cessation of fighting and to create proper conditions for a free and impartial plebiscite to decide whether the State of Jammu & Kashmir is to accede to India or Pakistan.” This plebiscite has never been held, but the collective memory of its denial continues to shape Kashmiri collective legal and political consciousness. To be Kashmiri today means to be part of a community that has for generations been denied the opportunity, recognized and reiterated by the UN, to exercise the right to determine its own political future.

Recognized by these Security Council resolutions in the late 1940s and 1950s, the idea of holding a plebiscite in Kashmir was also acknowledged and agreed to by prominent Indian leaders. Prime Minister Jawaharlal Nehru articulated a commitment to the spirit of Kashmiri self-determination at the time of independence in this statement on All India Radio on November 2, 1947: “We have declared that the fate of Kashmir is ultimately to be decided by the people. That pledge we have given and the maharaja has supported it not

only to the people of Kashmir but to the world. We will not, and cannot back out of it. We are prepared when peace and law and order have been established to have a referendum held under international auspices like the United Nations. We want it to be a fair and just reference to the people, and we shall accept their verdict. I can imagine no fairer and juster offer.” However, within the span of a few years, Kashmiri demands for the plebiscite became thoroughly criminalized as the state actively engaged in the jailing of popularly elected leaders, the suppression of Kashmiri freedom of expression, and legal framings of conspiracy and antinational activity. These patterns of criminalization, established through the installation of the apparatus of postcolonial governance in Kashmir in the 1950s, continue to the present day.

Kashmir’s first elections, conducted through proclamation by the sitting head of state Karan Singh in 1951, put the first state-level Constituent Assembly in place—a critically important development because this body was responsible for establishing the foundation of rule in the new J&K state. Through the elections, Sheikh Abdullah, the Kashmiri statesman who had led the Quit Kashmir agitation for Kashmiri self-rule and founded the J&K Muslim Conference in 1932—a party that changed its name to the NC in 1938—became prime minister of the state. But these elections were held amid an atmosphere of dissent and repression, with popular perceptions of rigging and claims that the elected leaders from the NC were elites acting as proxies of the government of India (Kak 2014). The quote below from Rughonath Vaishnavi, a political activist and a founder member of the NC who later resigned from the party for his opposing views and was jailed seven times from the 1950s to the 1960s, expresses the atmosphere of political repression through which many dissenting voices were silenced during this time:

Kashmiri freedom fighters were lifted during the darkness of the night and kicked into dark cells without knowing the grounds of their imprisonment. Orders of arrest of the NC opponents, mainly Muslim conference workers and any other political big-wigs who did not see eye to eye with the NC were issued from the head quarters. The jail officers unquestioningly obeyed to put the arrested person behind the prison gates. But there were other methods of terror and fear which the NC volunteers were allowed to resort to in order to see the silence of the grave did not suffer any vibration on account of dissent or political difference with the powers that held the sway. The local media was thoroughly gagged. (Vaishnavi n.d.)

Throughout the 1950s, the state actively worked to subvert the circulation of opposing perspectives and ideas through the restriction of popular media that did not conform to state interests. Popular forms of dissent were framed as anti-national, seditious, and subversive. Many Kashmiris were jailed for conspiring against the state, arrests that replicated colonial-era laws that had been used to repress rebellions against British rule. Sheikh Abdullah himself oversaw the arrest and jailing of opposition activists, holding them in jails across the region in the name of safeguarding the security and peaceful atmosphere of the state.

The government of India soon turned on its own propped-up NC regime. Sheikh Abdullah was dismissed and subsequently arrested in 1953 on the grounds of antinational activity for allegedly espousing the cause of Kashmiri self-determination. While he was in jail, the Constituent Assembly ratified J&K's accession to India in 1954 and then adopted a state constitution, formally declaring the state to be part of India, in 1956. Abdullah was jailed nearly consistently from 1953 until 1964; he was on trial with others in the Kashmir Conspiracy Case from 1958 until the government of India dropped the charges in 1964.¹³ In this way, the very premise of the current political arrangement is grounded on the legal identification of the demand for plebiscite as an antinational position.

Clearly, then, right from Kashmir's accession to India in 1947, the Indian state criminalized Kashmiri aspirations and demands for a plebiscite. Farukh Faheem in this volume outlines the need to historicize the Kashmiri freedom struggle, highlighting the popular rebellion against Dogra rule in 1931 as a key moment when Kashmiris forged a collective and politicized consciousness against oppression. His argument that the dispute in Kashmir should not be narrated solely through a Cold War optic enables us to map more local historic and cultural factors that both shaped the conflict and kept its memory alive in Kashmir's public sphere. The unmistakable sign of people's resentment toward India, expressed most vividly during cricket matches between India and Pakistan and during the boycott of official rituals of Indian national celebration, underscore the urgent need to restore local histories of the Kashmir conflict, ones that long predate the end of the Cold War.

Kashmiris who developed their political consciousness during this time found themselves in a legal and political double bind, with their aspiration of freedom guaranteed through national commitments and international law yet denied through state suppression and criminalization. Maqbool Bhatt, the early Kashmiri freedom fighter and cofounder of the JKLF in the 1960s, came of age during this period, attending college in Baramulla in the mid-1950s and then

crossing over to Pakistan in 1958. Bhatt described the atmosphere of repression to a Pakistani journalist in 1971: “In December 1957, the release of the lion of Kashmir (Sheikh Abdullah) initiated a chain of agitation activities. My BA exams were scheduled in the month of March 1958. The examination centre was at Srinagar. The arrests of freedom fighters had started. My last exam was on April 2, 1958. Sheikh was rearrested on April 27. There was a crackdown on student activists and many were arrested. I was an obvious target. Therefore, I went underground. After three months when my exam results were announced, I asked my father to go and bring my ‘provisional marks certificate.’ Securing my certificate, I came to Pakistan in August 1958. First we came to Lahore but then in September 1958 settled in Peshawar” (quoted in Faheem 2016). Maqbool Bhatt’s revolutionary actions throughout the 1960s and 1970s, especially his coordination of the hijacking of a passenger airplane traveling from Srinagar to Jammu in 1971, internationalized the Kashmir freedom struggle and transformed him into Shaheed-e-Azam, meaning “the greatest martyr,” a powerful and enduring symbol of Kashmiri resistance against Indian occupation. Maqbool Bhatt was arrested by the governments of both India and Pakistan and ultimately executed in Tihar Jail in Delhi in February 1984 on charges of killing an Indian intelligence officer in 1966. While on trial in Pakistan on charges of collaboration with Indian intelligence forces, Bhatt articulated his vision of *azadi* in words that still resonate in Kashmiri popular culture today: “For us [Kashmiris], *azadi* means not just getting rid of foreign occupation of our beloved motherland but also to remove hunger, poverty, ignorance and disease, and to overcome economic and social deprivation. One day, we shall achieve that *azadi*” (Bashir 2016). The symbolism of his execution and the continuing resting of his remains in Tihar—termed by today’s freedom fighters as a “postexecution imprisonment”—resonates with contemporary realities of military power and its abuse in Kashmir. We turn to some of these in the next section in order to situate Kashmir’s intensive militarization and the denial of people’s right to self-determination within a global economy of war and terror and the emergence of right-wing Hindu nationalism in India.

India’s War Economy and Hinduization of Territory

Even though the Kashmiri struggle for freedom predates 1989 and the beginning of the Cold War, the Indian strategy in Kashmir has in large part been shaped by India’s increasing investments in global arms and military alliances

as part of its war economy. India currently maintains the largest democracy and the fourth-largest military in the world, behind the United States, Russia, and China. Israel is India's second-largest arms supplier behind Russia, with bilateral arms trade estimated at ten billion dollars across the past decade (Ningthoujam 2014). Taken together, the United States, Israel, and India, three of the world's most powerful democracies, constitute a strong and unified political front by engaging in a shared vision of threat and security as part of a global war on terror. These links among militarized democracies, each of them empires in their own ways, take other forms as well, including exchange of counterinsurgency expertise, strategies, and weapons, bringing the wars on terror home to internal populations. Drawing on Edward Said's articulation of the way in which empires develop linkages to maintain hegemonic domination over distant peripheries, Rupal Oza (2007, 10) traces "the emergence of this 'contrapuntal geography' based on macabre camaraderie anchored in a discourse of strategic alliance and common enemy." This contrapuntal geography demonstrates the emergence of new global networks of state power and control among state regimes that direct violence not against external threats or enemies but instead against internal populations of civilians that are identified as enemies of the state. Such sustained "war(s) against the people" are framed as foundations of national identity, integrity, and security (Duschinski 2009, 211).

In India as elsewhere, this military expansion and entrenchment is tied to particular forms of religious and gendered nationalism. The BJP Hindu nationalist political party, which is premised upon a cultural nationalist vision of Hindutva (with the slogan "one people, one nation, one culture") that traces back to the late colonial period in India, rose to political prominence through a powerful and often violent majoritarian movement in the 1990s. The nationalist vision of the BJP is energized symbolically through the image of a male warrior, a militant reinterpretation of manhood that is cultivated to assert the charged masculinity and patriotism of Hindu men (Banerjee 2003, 168). Notions of warriorhood are also extended to women of the Hindu Right who often mobilize collectively against Pakistan's interventions in Kashmir, sending combative messages to the enemy nation: "If you ask for milk, we will give you pudding; if you ask for Kashmir, we will rip you apart" (*doodh mago toh kheer denge; Kashmir mango toh cheer denge*) (Banerjee 2003, 168).

Right-wing Hindu nationalism has long identified the Kashmiri resistance struggle as a threat to national integrity. In its 2014 election manifesto,

the BJP highlighted its stance on Kashmir as part of its commitment to “Integrating the Nation”: “In a democracy, everyone is not only free, but also encouraged to voice his or her concerns. It is also necessary that these voices be heard and concerns redressed. However, all this should happen within the framework of our constitution and with the spirit of ‘India First’” (Bharatiya Janata Party 2014, 7). Since coming to power in the election, Narendra Modi, who first rose to international prominence as an integral member of the BJP regime in the late 1990s, has adopted the role of emperor through his symbolic presentation and rhetoric. His inauguration, framed as a coming-of-age for India, presented a spectacle of empire, packaged in intensely masculinized forms of nation and nationalism. His longtime loyalties to Hindutva’s military wing, the Rashtriya Swayamsevak Sangh (RSS), and his complicity in the massacres of Muslim civilians in Gujarat during his time as chief minister of the state in 2002 are explicit indicators of his commitment to a Hinduized vision of Indian nationalism—and the military is an essential component of this vision and its actualization.

The occupation of Kashmir plays out through symbolic and discursive strategies in which Kashmir, the only Muslim-majority state in India, represents an integral part of India’s sacred geography, and the military is promoted as a friend and guardian. Prominent signage provides a constant reminder and justification of the ubiquitous presence of India’s military forces. The streets of Srinagar are lined with billboards framing the Central Reserve Police Force (CRPF) as a friendly and benevolent force: “CRPF is always for people of valley,” “CRPF—our ultimate aim is your well being,” and “CRPF—with U for U always.” Stone markers along the highways outside of the city proclaim “Kashmir se Kanyakumari tak, mera bharat mahaan!” (From Kashmir to Kanyakumari, my India is great!), written in the Devanagari script used in Hindi-speaking India, but not Urdu-speaking Kashmir, to remind people that Kashmir is an integral part of the Indian nation and that India from north to south is united and one.

One of the most notable of these strategies is the rigorous expansion and explicit politicization of pilgrimage in Kashmir. The RSS and other Hindu nationalist groups, including the current BJP administration, use highly politicized versions of natural, anthropological, and archaeological science to inscribe Hindu history onto the natural territory of Kashmir Valley. At the same time, as Indian Army camps have laid claim to space by spreading across the landscape, the state has constructed new Hindu temples, imposing a particular historical narrative onto a complex landscape.

This has played out in complicated ways through highly politicized Kashmiri Pandit groups located outside of the valley. Kashmiri Pandits constitute Kashmir Valley's Hindu religious minority, most of whom fled their homes at the onset of Kashmir's armed rebellion in 1989. Many Kashmiri Pandits, especially those from the rural hinterlands and from lower socioeconomic strata, lived in difficult conditions in makeshift tents in Jammu, Delhi, and other parts of India after giving up their land and property in Kashmir. Their stories of departure are deeply contested; while many in Kashmir view their departure from Kashmir as Governor Jagmohan Malhotra's grand design to exterminate Muslims once Kashmir's Hindu minority had fled the valley, many Kashmiri Pandits track the onset of Kashmir's armed rebellion in 1989 to a new brand of Islamic extremism, which in their view posed a grave threat to Kashmir's Hindu minority (Duschinski 2008). Since the mid-1990s, Kashmiri Pandits have become caught up in the nationalist movement more so than before, as the idea of return to homeland constitutes one of the main points in Modi's BJP mandate. The manifesto emphasizes the BJP's long-standing commitment to the return of Kashmiri Pandits to "the land of their ancestors" with "full dignity, security and assured livelihood" (Bharatiya Janata Party 2014, 8). The recurring call for separate security zones for Kashmiri Pandits reveals the extent to which notions of security have become Hinduized in Kashmir. Community leaders of small but vocal and politically positioned groups such as Panun Kashmir, headquartered in Delhi and Bombay, have all along demanded a separate homeland for Kashmiri Pandits, carved out of the existing state of J&K. The BJP's return to power has reenergized such groups.

In recent years, the influx of many Indians to Kashmir as part of pilgrimage (*yatra*) tourism, a sector that is encouraged by both the state government and the central governments, is, according to many Kashmiris, a deliberate attempt to Hinduize Kashmir. Pilgrimage tourism has been promoted as a way to showcase previously unexplored aspects of Kashmir's history and culture to domestic Indian tourists. Such events have intensified efforts to mark Kashmiri territory as foundationally Hindu. The annual pilgrimage to Amarnath cave, a Shaivite Hindu shrine near the town of Pahalgam in Kashmir, has expanded over the past few decades from a few thousand to tens of thousands, and the state has actively worked to develop the pilgrimage route. It has now become intensely politicized, as hundreds of thousands of Indian Hindus visit the site in order to assert their undisputed claim over Kashmir. In 2008, popular protests erupted around the state's proposed transfer of approximately one hundred acres of land to the Amarnath Shrine Board, a

body constituted by the J&K Assembly and tasked with oversight of the pilgrimage. The move struck many Kashmiris as part of a larger effort to erode Kashmir's autonomy and redefine Kashmir's cultural heritage.¹⁴

Although the politicization of the Amarnath pilgrimage was already under way throughout the early 2000s, the current efforts indicate an explicit mobilization of pilgrimage as a way to redefine Kashmir's history as foundationally Hindu. This means that new sacred sites are routinely discovered and then claimed through appeals to ancient history. In 2014, a new Himalayan pilgrimage site called Kausarnag, a lake and valley tucked away in the Shopian District in Kashmir Valley, was put on the map as a site of religious and historical significance for Hindus throughout India. The state government granted forty people permission to conduct the *yatra*, claiming that Kausarnag was one of two places in Kashmir associated with Vishnu worship. The state government initially granted permission to a Kashmiri Pandit community organization to proceed to the site through Kashmir for its annual pilgrimage but then revoked that permission in August of the same year after massive protests erupted in the valley, especially in Kulgam, to stop what was seen by the local Muslim residents as the Indian government's strategy to assert Hindu dominance over Kashmir's cultural and physical landscape. Many Kashmiri Pandit groups were deeply upset by the revocation of the order, blaming the state government for giving into communal sentiments of Kashmiri separatists and for not recognizing Kausarnag's deep religious historicity, which in their view was enshrined in the *Nilmat Purana*, a sixth-century Hindu religious text. Through such discursive and ideological claims, Kashmiri Pandits joined the Indian government's ongoing efforts to use sacred sites to firmly place Kashmir within Hinduism's religious geography so that Kashmir was no longer viewed as remote or peripheral.

Landscapes are not the only sites in Kashmir that are appropriated to further integrationist agendas. The histories and identities of several border communities are being rewritten to secure India's historic claims over Kashmir. Claims of Aryan antiquity and its relations with Indian identity as Hindu have long been central to right-wing imaginings of Indian nationhood (Bhan 2014a). Mona Bhan in this book shows how the RSS initiatives in Ladakh foster new racial and religious imaginaries in which both Aryanism and Hinduism are portrayed as indigenous to Kashmir. The RSS has thus asserted its claims over Kashmir's contested borders by incorporating many ethnic and religious minorities into the Pan-Hindu pantheon. Many of these efforts take on a masculinist fervor. In Ladakh, for instance, the RSS is invested in

reframing the historicity of border communities through a highly masculine and racial construction of their ethnic identities in order to portray them as indigenous Hindus as well as to reinvigorate Hindu conceptions of virility and manhood (see Bhan, this volume).

In an attempt to resist the state's designs to reclaim people and territory and redefine Kashmir's history to authorize its illegitimate rule, Kashmiris have long mobilized countermemory projects to keep the brutalities of the occupation alive in the public sphere. We turn to these sites of memory and history making in the next section.

Martyrdom, Mourning, and Socially Remembered Deaths

Conditions of occupation, militarization, and institutionalized impunity threaten to destroy Kashmir's collective memories. Across Kashmir, the state has severely limited and restricted official memory initiatives, defined as "any community or group effort that publicly remembers an event or series of events in history. Memory initiatives can range from commemorative activities to archiving and documentation efforts to a wide range of collective creative processes, such as oral histories, body mapping, and more" (International Sites of Conscience website). In this context, unofficial sites of memory production have emerged to organize and present collective memories of Kashmiri contestation and struggle that challenge hegemonic versions of Kashmiri history. These "unofficial truth projects" (Bickford 2007, 995) tell the story of Kashmiri history—an alternative history to the one propagated by the state and one that has been suppressed by dominant forms of history and memory making. In this sense, the forms of cultural production emerging through Kashmir's second revolution are doing the active work of producing everyday sites of conscience that spatialize memory and memorialize space in ways that are consistent with the decades-long struggle for freedom.

The most widely recognized of these sites are the martyrs' graveyards, spread across the towns of Kashmir. The martyrs' graveyards of varying sizes are safe and secure spaces outside of state control where political death is imbued with sacred meaning and protected from state destruction. Sanjay Kak's 2008 documentary film on the Kashmiri freedom struggle, *Jashn-e-Azaadi* (How We Celebrate Freedom), features a shot of the morning mist lifting from Mazar-e-Shuhada, Kashmir's largest martyrs' graveyard, located in Srinagar (Figure 4). Mazar-e-Shuhada lies adjacent to Eidgah, the large



FIGURE 4. The Martyrs' Graveyard at Eidgah in Srinagar.
Photo credit: Sanjay Kak 2008.

grassy park where political leaders have historically held profreedom rallies and where prayers are offered at the time of Eid-al-Fitr and Eid-al-Adha. In the film, an elderly man walks among the headstones searching for the grave site of his son, who was killed in the 1990s. “After such a long time,” the man says, “one forgets.” Kak’s cinematography lingers on the gray sky, the snowy ground, and the barren trees, evoking the atmosphere of longing, mourning, and suffering associated with the burial site. As this powerful image suggests, martyrs’ graveyards are very powerful symbolic sites of Kashmiri struggle and loss. They have transformed “dead bodies from the war into symbolic bodies” and become important representations of the movement—one of the most defining symbols of Kashmiri collective resistance, agency, death, and even sociality (Junaid, this volume).

The graves at Mazar-e-Shuhada define martyrdom in the context of Kashmir. Here, martyrdom as a form of socially remembered death constitutes a potent nationalist symbol locating the freedom struggle in history. Martyrdom, Junaid writes in this volume, has “shed its sacred cloak” to assume a multiplicity of meanings. Only those who have sacrificed their lives for pursuit of *azadi* and tread on the “path of truth” as opposed to the path of falsehood and collaborative politics are celebrated and memorialized as martyrs. Their collective remembrance “turns martyrdom into a potent death,” into a potent

death” (Junaid, this volume). Martyrs’ graveyards both celebrate Kashmiri will against oppression and forge new understandings of truth, faith, death, and sacrifice. The headstones of young men slain in the 1990s inscribe their names, code names, family localities, and dates of birth and death, while larger headstones of prominent nationalist leaders provide more detailed and descriptive signage. The large headstone for Sheikh Abdul Aziz of the J&K People’s League chronicles his periods of time in jail from 1973 to 2007 and issues a proclamation in English that he “achieved martyrdom on 11th August 2008 at Chayal Boniyar Uri, Baramulla while heading a peaceful protest march to smash away LOC (bloody line) during on to Muzaffarabad [sic] (Muzaffarabad Chalo) in view of the economic blockade enforced on Kashmiris by Hindu fanatics of Jammu. . . . For his resolute [sic] to Kashmir’s peaceful resolution was enchained but India failed to exterminate his freedom sentiment, thus nicknamed (Jail Bird)” (ellipses in original). As the headstones and memorial plaques point toward memories of the past, they also project aspirational visions of the future. The open grave of Maqbool Bhatt issues a meaningful symbolic call for the return of remains. “We will know that we have achieved *azadi*,” said one young man in an interview, “when the remains of Maqbool Bhatt are returned for burial in this grave.” Likewise, Afzal Guru, who was the prime accused in the attack on the Indian Parliament in 2001 and was subsequently hanged to assuage, according to a Supreme Court order, Indian society’s “collective consciousness,” is celebrated in Kashmir as the “martyr of the nation.” As Zia argues in this volume, his open grave in the Martyrs’ Graveyard illustrates yet again how Kashmiri bodies are made ungrievable by writ of the state even as the “jailed interment of [their] corpse[s]” energizes the resistance. The Kashmiri call for the return of martyrs’ remains resonates with similar calls, advanced under very different circumstances, from oppressed, colonized, and vulnerable communities in other contexts—for example, repatriation demands advanced as part of larger reparations projects among Namibian and Native American communities. At Eidgah, graveyard caretakers act as “memory entrepreneurs” (Jelin 2003), cultivating the memory markers at the site, and local young residents act as de facto and impromptu translators and guides, especially for researchers, journalists, and curious tourists attempting to access people’s versions of Kashmiri history.

The practices of remembrance in relation to martyrdom can be traced in other symbolic spaces of informal memory work as well. In the summer of 2010, the newspaper *Greater Kashmir* carried daily profiles of the youths killed by security forces. In the absence of state acknowledgment of its actions, these

impressionistic sketches of lost lives create an archive of collective mourning, reminiscent of the "Portraits of Grief" memorials published by the *New York Times* in the aftermath of the September 11 attacks in the United States. By the summer of 2011, a series of symbolic memorializations had been installed to commemorate, interpret, and give meaning to other Kashmiri deaths, including sisters-in-law Neelofar and Asiya in Shopian (see Duschinski and Hoffman, this volume; Kazi, this volume) and fourteen-year-old Tufail Mattoo, who had been shot in the head with a tear-gas canister while playing in a grassy park in a downtown locality of Srinagar. Tufail's body is buried in two sites in the city, partially in a garlanded grave at Mazar-e-Shuhada, adjacent to several of the other youths killed in 2010, and partially in a grave at the grassy park, where an inscription reads "Tufail, your blood will start a revolution." In the park, children played games and flew kites in the shadow of a memorial tap—a water fountain inscribed with a plaque remembering Tufail and the circumstances surrounding his death. Such water taps were common forms of memorialization for fallen martyrs in the 1990s but have not actively constituted features of the memorial landscape of Kashmir since that time. The traffic circle near Tufail's family house featured a sign renaming it Martyr Tufail Mattoo Circle. On the one-year anniversary of his death, his father held a symbolic commemoration and human rights symposium at his house as a day to remember, mourn, and issue calls for justice.

Such practices of remembrance suggest important continuities across time, highlighting the idea that the current struggle is a continuation of a decades-old movement. At the same time, new media technologies have introduced virtual forms of memorialization (Misri 2014, 133–60). The archive of mourning published in *Greater Kashmir* in 2010 circulates in print and also in online formats, supplementing other memorials on social media websites and blogs, while the MC Kash song "Moment of Truth" catalogs the names of sixty-five youths killed that summer. The Facebook page for Shaheed Maqbool Bhatt proclaims his most famous statement, "My only crime is that I have rebelled against slavery, oppression, poverty, ignorance and exploitation of my people." A UK-based memorial website identifies Maqbool Bhatt as the "Che of Kashmir" and features quotes, interviews, news videos, and short stories about the martyred hero as well as the promotional trailer for a film titled *Bring Him Back* that focuses on his mother's travels throughout the region, "praying, visiting his empty grave, calling for people to join her struggle to bring him back." The website, which offers visitors a downloadable image of "I am MB" and a button to "Share on Facebook," links to Jammu Kashmir TV,

“a groundbreaking New Media venture by British Kashmiris to open up new channels for connecting Kashmiris across the globe and provide them with information, news, entertainment, and education about issues and opportunities that effect their lives.” Such virtual memorials provide a way for collective memories to be forged through the production of a diasporic defiance extending beyond the borders of the valley.

These forms of physical, temporal, and virtual memorialization are epitomized in Kashmiri collective responses to the hanging of Afzal Guru, the primary accused in the Parliament attack of December 2001 (see Zia, this volume). On February 9, 2013, the government of India executed Guru and interred his body in Delhi’s Tihar Jail. As Arundhati Roy and others have discussed in depth, Guru’s life story highlights the complex realities of life for many Kashmiris who came of age during the militancy phase of the freedom struggle (Roy 2006a, 2006b). After several years fighting in the movement, Guru had surrendered to security forces in the early 1990s and from that time onward had been subjected to the everyday harassment, interrogation, exploitation, and torture at the hands of Indian military and paramilitary forces in Kashmir. After his arrest in the immediate aftermath of the attack, the legal proceedings against him constituted a national spectacle mobilizing fears of terrorism, martyrdom, and threats to national security (Sengupta 2006). Although the final Supreme Court judgment in 2005 acknowledged the circumstantial nature of the evidence against him, it ultimately concluded that “the incident, which resulted in heavy casualties, had shaken the entire nation, and the collective conscience of society will only be satisfied if capital punishment is awarded to the offender.” This constituted the grounds of his execution. Kashmiri protesters gathered with Indian human rights activists on the day of the hanging in Jantar Mantar in Delhi. In Kashmir too there were huge protests. An open grave was established for Guru next to the open grave of Maqbool Bhatt at Mazar-e-Shuhada. A memorial website “created in memory of Shaheed Afzal Guru who symbolizes and epitomizes the innocent oppressed Kashmiri Nation under Indian rule” presents background information, newspaper articles, transcripts, and court documents relating to the case. It aims to serve “as a researchable database about the man and his occupied nation. This website is an attempt to break silence over Kashmir.”¹⁵

Victims’ associations play a key role in these struggles for justice. The most prominent of these is the Association of Parents of Disappeared Persons (APDP), founded in the early 1990s by Parveena Ahangar.¹⁶ Ahangar first began to advance claims against the state when her son Javed Ahmed

Ahangar disappeared while in the custody of security forces in 1991. Since 1994, she has mobilized a network of mothers and fathers to pursue their cases through the court system, accumulating documentation that traces the failures of the Indian legal system to offer redress. The movement now includes hundreds of parents of disappeared people who collectively speak on behalf of the 8,000–10,000 cases of enforced disappearance across Kashmir. In the summer of 2014, Parveena spoke about her struggle for justice at the University of Westminster in the United Kingdom. “I will die,” she said in her statement, which has been archived and circulated as a video to an international audience online. “But I will not stop. . . . This is a deep, painful wound. I will fight on as long as I am alive. . . . Court is the highest institution. If I can’t get justice from there what good is a president. . . . Even the judge knows if he decides in my favour he’s going to be shifted away.” Parveena folds her struggle for justice in relation to her son’s disappearance within the broader framework of Kashmiri struggles for independence: “*Azadi* for me is when we see our sons.”

Conclusion

Since 1996, the APDP has been coordinating the most long-standing public performance of memory and justice in Kashmir. On the tenth day of every month, the parents gather in Pratap Park in the heart of Lal Chowk, the business district of Srinagar, and protest the state practice of disappearance as well as the state refusal to provide information about the whereabouts of their loved ones. The parents, mostly mothers, wear black armbands and sit in silence, surrounded by a display of banners with the names and images of their disappeared sons, while journalists and filmmakers document their struggle for justice. These protests, reminiscent of those staged by the Mothers of Plaza de Mayo in Argentina and the Mothers of the Disappeared in Srebrenica, have been featured in films such as *Inshallah Kashmir* (2012), *Take It in Blood* (2013), and *Blood Leaves Its Trail* (2015). On August 30, 2014, the APDP staged a new form of protest performance at the park on the International Day of Victims of Enforced Disappearance (Figure 5). As the women bore silent witness, a ghostly specter, half alive and half dead, sat on an ornate chair, shrouded in burial rags and covered in mud, with the broken scales of justice in his hand. This material embodiment of victimhood constituted a public shaming of the state responsible for the violence yet unwilling to acknowledge it or offer redress.



FIGURE 5. APDP Protest, International Day of Victims of Enforced Disappearance, August 30, 2014. Photo credit: Authint.com 2014.

These forms of action are not only directed toward the past. They reinterpret the past, but at the same time they stake claims in the present with reference to the future. They actively intervene in producing and circulating alternative representations of Kashmir that challenge and destabilize hegemonic representations that dominate mainstream Indian narratives. Given the impossibility of relying on Indian media to represent their agony, Kashmiris have taken it upon themselves to foreground their experiences and engagements with the Indian state. Today, Kashmiri youths have turned toward writing and other forms of journalistic and literary expression as career pathways, in contrast to previous generations who maintained a focus on medical, engineering, and other technical fields. Much of this writing, while circulated locally, is also meant to draw in a broader global audience so that Kashmiris can actively forge ties of empathy and solidarity with oppressed peoples elsewhere and humanize their experience of a long occupation. Going beyond the framework of the nation-state through literary and artistic productions is a strategy for creating an alternative political space in which Kashmiri lives matter and their stakes in the state's political future are recognized and validated.

Throughout the twentieth century and to the present day, scholarship on Kashmir—which has been dominated by political objectifications that emphasize Kashmir’s intractability or reduce it to a bilateral political battle between India and Pakistan—has also been implicated in this form of narrative violence as a site of collaboration complicit in the structures of occupation and oppression that have silenced and denied Kashmiri voices. But this is no longer possible, as Kashmiri academics are increasingly expressing on their own terms their own views and perspectives to a global audience. In doing so, they are not only challenging India’s political claims over Kashmir but are also identifying the state’s political relationship to Kashmir as an occupation. This practice of naming the brutal modalities of power in Kashmir as occupation is a political and moral choice, a commitment to exposing the Indian performance of democracy, human rights, and citizenship that has continually undermined the basic rights and freedoms of Kashmiris. The raw brutality of occupation is felt and recognized in the margins. Such recognition has opened space for new forms of solidarity between differently positioned academics who share a common commitment to the language of occupation, the vision of *azadi*, and the project of ethnography. This volume is based on the premise of the radical potential of ethnography to disrupt occupation in all of its spatial, temporal, and discursive forms. Through this ethnographic disruption, the margins become the center of analysis. The ethnographic project makes visible lives and experiences that are otherwise erased from history, making possible alternative societies based on collective aspirations of hope, justice, and freedom.

Notes

1. The Urdu word *dajjal* refers to a hangman.
2. The government of India has not released any official numbers; these are estimates made from various credible sources, such as Kak (2011) and the report compiled by the International People’s Tribunal on Human Rights and Justice in Indian-Administered Kashmir and Association of Parents of Disappeared Persons (2015).
3. For more on the 2010 uprising, see Ali (2010), Kak (2010, 2011), Shah (2013).
4. MC Kash samples U2’s “Sunday Bloody Sunday” in his song “13th of July,” while “Moment of Truth” references Palestinian struggles: “The truth is hard to swallow / ‘Cause all this social hierarchy is hard to follow / Economic inequality is the key to sorrow / Only if you can understand the plan they call new world order / You will know why there’s an Israeli flag inside Palestinian border / why the screams of people in West bank and Gaza / are ran over by tanks by America.”

5. Some of the many examples of such literary and artistic expression in recent years include Shahnaz Bashir's novel *The Half Mother* (2014), Anjum Zamarud Habib's memoir *Prisoner No. 100* (2011), Sanjay Kak's photographic history *Witness Kashmir 1986–2016* (2017), Nitasha Kaul's novel *Residue* (2014), Mir Khalid's reflections in *Jaffna Street* (2017), Basharat Peer's memoir *Curfewed Night* (2010), Malik Sajad's graphic novel *Munnu* (2015), and Mirza Waheed's novels *The Collaborator* (2012a) and *The Book of Gold Leaves* (2014a) as well as the other films, novels, poems, and essays discussed throughout this chapter.

6. For more on the postcolonial political history of Kashmir and especially the India-Pakistan wars, see Bose (2010) and Schofield (1996).

7. Historians Mridu Rai (2004) and Chitralkha Zutshi (2004) provide detailed historical accounts of the construction of distinctive forms of Kashmiri cultural identity and political consciousness during the period of Hindu sovereignty and indirect colonial rule prior to partition.

8. For more on Pakistan's ideological position in relation to Kashmir, see Mahmud (2006) and Robinson (2013). For more on the Line of Control, see Kabir (2009) and Aggarwal (2004).

9. Ali (2016) notes that while Pakistan has a dismal record of suppressing dissent in Azad Kashmir and Gilgit-Baltistan, the intensity of violence in Indian-administered Kashmir far exceeds that on the Pakistan side of the LoC.

10. These include American citizens such as radio broadcaster David Barsamian and scholar Richard Shapiro. Gautam Navlakha, a noted journalist and activist, was also denied entry to Srinagar during the 2010 protests.

11. For more on these mass graves, see Scott-Clark (2012), Peer (2011), and Waheed (2012b).

12. For example, Major General Sheru Thapliyal (2011) writes in an article in *India Defence Review*: "Why should a state of Indian Union have a special status? It conveys a wrong signal not only to Kashmiris but also to the separatists, Pakistan and indeed the international community that J&K is still to become integral part of India, the sooner Article 370 is done away is better."

13. In 1957, the UN specifically recognized that this ratification by the Constituent Assembly was not equivalent to a plebiscite through Security Council Resolution 122, the National Conference Verdict.

14. For more on religion and political mobilization in Kashmir, with special attention to the Amarnath Shrine Board uprisings in 2008, see Roy (2008) and Sokefeld (2012).

15. The website can be accessed at <https://shaheedafzalguru.wordpress.com/>.

16. For more on Parveena Ahangar and the APDP, see Association of Parents of Disappeared Persons (2011), Mathur (2012, 232–35), and Zia (2016).

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