

Turmoil or State Terror in Kashmir? India's “Hindutva Project”

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Global Research, November 25, 2019

Region: [Asia](#)

Theme: [History](#), [Police State & Civil Rights](#)

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“They weren’t like us and for that reason deserved to be ruled” – Edward Said

The parallels with the Zionist state are impossible not to notice. This should be no surprise considering the close collaboration between Israel and India in virtually all domains of ‘security,’ i.e. containing the ‘Muslim threat.’ The completion of the fascist Hindutva project of completely annexing the entirety of Indian-occupied Kashmir, utterly unlawful considered the territory’s internationally-recognized status as disputed territory, comes straight from the Israeli playbook. Classic Zionist cliches of ‘transfer’ (i.e., ethnic cleansing) and settler-colonialism based on the absurd mantra of “a land without a people for a people without a land” has become New Dehli’s modus operandi toward Kashmiris.

As Said notes, “they weren’t like us.” In India today, there are entire populations designated by the Hindu right government of the BJP, with its fascist ‘brownshirts’ in the form of the RSS and Shiv Sena, as not like ‘us.’ These include Dalits, tribal peoples resisting ‘development’ that further impoverishes and marginalizes their existence, the Naxalites demanding their own autonomy, refugees of many generations and others in Assam all of a sudden denied citizenship, and of course the most venal form of state terrorism, the more than 700,000 troops that militarily occupy, kill, injure, blind, rape, and detain indefinitely the Kashmiri people who refuse, decade after decade, to submit to a state of subjugation to such immense cruelty.

The 20th century fascist Hindutva project for a ‘Hindu Raj,’ it must be noted, is a modernist fundamentalist movement that actually despises and is embarrassed by the majority of Hindus themselves. It is an upper caste movement that despised ‘weak Hindus’ that refused the sociopathic psychology of violence and toxic masculinity that the ‘strong Hindus’ (and their twisted mindset) desired. Hence, their assassination of Ghandhi.

The current repugnant predicament that the Indian state has imposed on Kashmiris is unbearable. The participants in this major international conference clearly recognized this, and were well-intentioned in attempting to develop strategies of assistance and resistance.

However, there was a noticeable absence of voices of Kashmiris themselves, and this has been a perennial problem. One of the lessons learned from the latest Indian assault on Kashmir is that mistakes of the past must be avoided at all costs. Kashmiri voices and Kashmiri lives must be centered, not those of Pakistanis and certainly not those of Indians. One of the other critical points raised was the sheer bankruptcy of much of the Indian liberal-left intelligentsia, both within India and abroad, to openly criticize and condemn New Dehli’s actions, and to stand in solidarity with Kashmiris. Indian academics and the diaspora

in general have been abysmal when it comes to the question of Kashmiris and their right to self-determination.

While it is undoubtedly the case that we have witnessed commentary in mainstream Western media like the New York Times and The Washington Post that, perhaps after virtually thirty years, have openly criticized India's butchery in Kashmir, it still very much seems that the economics of a market of over a billion people will trump the blood and lives of eight million Kashmiris. The so-called international community, with murmurs here and there about how unfortunate this situation is, once again proves itself to be utterly useless in upholding international law and applying any pressure to the Subcontinent's hegemonic power.

Nevertheless, all is not lost and the seeds of hope, of ongoing formidable Kashmiri resistance for liberation, were underscored. There were some who raised the usual canard of where is the 'peaceful' Mandela in struggles like Kashmir and Palestine. Some of us respectfully reminded them that Mandela did not go to jail for being 'peaceful': he was jailed for founding the MK, the armed wing of the African National Congress. And he could have been released at least ten years earlier from jail, but he refused to renounce the armed struggle against the oppressive minority white Apartheid regime. Armed struggle against colonial occupation has always been an internationally guaranteed right for all colonized peoples. It's just that we live in such Islamophobic times that 'anti-colonial/occupation' struggles are only seen through the prism of 'Islamic terrorism' when it involves just Muslim resistance to oppression.

One controversial issue was that of the language used to describe the current scenario in Kashmir. Just like in the Zionist Occupied Territories, if the Palestinians had F-16s, tanks, cutting edge missiles, and defense systems, then you can call it what most of the mainstream media call it: the Israeli-Palestinian 'conflict.' Calling it a conflict is a farcical ploy to conceal the routine Zionist festivals of slaughter against Palestinians, shooting at them like pigeons. And the exact same problematique of semantics applies to the similar plight of Kashmiris living under the most militarized occupation in the world.

Finally, it would be unfair to say that there is public activism on Kashmir at the moment unlike we've seen for a long time. Just in the US alone, the 'Stand Up for Kashmir' movement of academics, activists, and ordinary concerned citizens has taken off like wildfire. In particular, Kashmiri women have powerfully conveyed their sordid narratives under Indian occupation to Western civil society utterly clueless about the situation.

Prime Minister Imran Khan unquestionably made a remarkably powerful plea to the world at the UN to not ignore the degradation to which Kashmiris are subject. However, Imran Khan, just like leaders before him like Martin Luther King, would be nothing if there not a budding mass movement to put pressure on civil society, academic institutions, companies, and governments to adopt the Palestinian strategy toward India: Boycott, Divestment, and Sanctions.

The Kashmiris are waiting for us to be in solidarity with them in confronting the terrorist behemoth that wants to completely subdue them, but never will.

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