

Kashmir reader



A joint publication by Mehnatkash Tehreek (Pakistan) and Mazdoor Inquilab (India) showcasing a collection of articles on the struggle for Kashmiri independence in India and Pakistan.

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Statement on the Kashmir struggle:



Protesters in Srinagar pelting stones on paramilitary police force

[The following article was written in 2011 during a period of heightened struggle in Indian Occupied Kashmir in the aftermath of the Shopian double murder case. At the time of writing this article, Indian Kashmir witnessed increased repression by Indian paramilitaries of the BSF and the armed forces.]

Recent development in Kashmir, particularly in the past 4-5 years have brought back the Kashmir question to the fore and posed it sharper than ever. Beginning with the protests surrounding the Shopian Double Murder case and the landmark State Transport Corporations Strikes which garnered the support of hundreds of thousands of workers, we are witnessing a heightened tension in the valley as the masses advance further and further towards self-determination. Counter posed to this advance is the increased suppression of dissent at the hands of the Indian state. The past 6 months have seen over a hundred Kashmiri youth falling victim to indiscriminate firing by the security forces stationed in the valley. These acts were committed with the intent of curbing peaceful protests in the valley against

Indian occupation. In the light of these events, we express unconditional support to the Kashmiri people in their struggle for self-determination.

For the self determination of Kashmir! :

The occupation of Kashmir has been brutal, treacherous and unjust. The democratic aspirations of the people of Kashmir have been continuously denied by the Indian ruling class time and again. The democratic aspirations of the Kashmiri people which began in the form of pro-democracy movements pitted against the repressive and reactionary monarchy in Kashmir has today resurfaced against an equally oppressive rule at the hands of India. In 1948 in the aftermath of the first Indo-Pak war, it was agreed by UN mandate that Kashmiris would be allowed a plebiscite to decide accession to either India or Pakistan in a democratic manner. Notwithstanding repeated false promises from Nehru to hold such a plebiscite, the accession of Kashmir into India at the hands of the Maharaja was accepted as the valid instrument of accession without regard to the aspirations of the Kashmiri people themselves.

Farce elections were made the norm in Kashmir in which the central government would conduct “tailor made” rigged elections to keep their prized proxy the National Conference in power in the state and through them exercise its own influence. Repeatedly, the NC proved itself to be an instrument of the Indian ruling classes serving the needs of occupation of the Kashmir. The question of a plebiscite still hangs on in the air retaining its validity as Kashmir’s self-determination stands unresolved. However, over time the original demand for plebiscite has lost some of its relevance owing to changes both nationally and internationally. For the fulfillment of the aspirations of the Kashmiri people towards self-determination it is imperative a plebiscite be held to decide whether the Kashmiri people want secession or not. However, for this a new instrument of plebiscite must be charted out taking into consideration the renewed aspirations of the Kashmiri people which aims beyond accession to either India or Pakistan.

Out with the troops! :

The presence of the occupational troops in Kashmir is the main foundation upon which the Indian state establishes its control over Kashmir. The fallout of the continued occupation is felt by the Kashmiri people on a daily basis who are subjected to repeated harassment and abuse at the hands of the Indian occupational force. Terror, murder and torture have become routine affairs for the Kashmiri people. The death toll of the occupation has already reached around 100000 in the last 20 years with thousands more if the years preceding the insurgency be considered. Forced disappearances, rape, torture are some of the

many methods used by the security forces in the region to maintain its hold in Kashmir.

In the light of the above it is imperative that there be a total troop withdrawal from Kashmir as well as an abolition of the authoritarian laws like AFSPA which shield the troops from any legal action after human rights abuses. Additionally we demand that the strategically vital affair of defense and security be left to the prerogative of the Kashmiri people themselves and not to the hands of the Indian state to decide for them. Additionally we demand that all those who have fallen victims to the excesses of security forces, be compensated adequately and a trial be held for those responsible for perpetrating such crimes against humanity.

Down with the Indian proxy! :

Since the start of the occupation of Kashmir, the Kashmiri bourgeois and their chief Political formation the National Conference have played the most treacherous role in the region paving the way for continued Indian occupation of Kashmir and courting silence at the indiscriminate human rights violations being perpetrated by the security forces stationed there. The National Conference exists in Kashmir solely under warrant from its supreme leaders stationed in Delhi under the Indian national Congress and its Bonapartist leadership. Its primary function is not towards the masses of peasants, workers and petty bourgeois of Kashmir but towards the interests of the Indian bourgeoisie dictating its policies via its main political instrument the Congress and legislative power based in Delhi. The National Conference is in essence the main enemy of the Kashmiri people within Kashmir.

Abolish the Indus Water Treaty! For a New Water sharing agreement!

During the Great Game between Russia and England for control over Asia a series of unequal treaties were meted out with China which gave effective control of huge regions of China to either Russian or British hands. The Indus water Treaty is like these unequal treaties in history giving the Indian bourgeois effective control over waters flowing into the Punjab river basin and effective control over Kashmiri waters thereby affecting Kashmir and Pakistan. The net effect of the treaty is drainage of wealth from Kashmir to India and a deliberate constriction of Kashmir's potential for infrastructural development.

We demand that negotiations be started with the Indian state to abolish this unequal treaty and a new treaty be drafted of water sharing taking into consideration the needs of the Kashmiri people and by extension fulfilling the needs of all the people of the Punjab basin! The independence of Kashmir would open up a whole new avenue for the formation of a just water sharing treaty which would cater to the needs of both the Kashmiri people as well as the Pakistani people thereby nullifying the negative effects of the treaty and making it easier

to irrigate the whole basin, control the occurrence of floods and make good any damage they cause.

For an independent Constituent Assembly! :

The demand for a Constituent assembly is a basic demand for any oppressed nation struggling for independence. In the present legal set up the Kashmiri national assembly has an existence which is essentially constricted by myriad legal obligations imposed by the Indian state. Add to this legal complexity, the political stranglehold held by the Congress in Kashmir working through its allies, the National Conference, the independence of the legislative body gets reduced to a mere farce. This cannot possibly be a valid realization of the democratic aspirations of the Kashmiri people and it is imperative that the Constituent assembly be freed of its constraints to legislate in all matters relating to Kashmir. The present Legislative Assembly created by the consent of the Indian ruling class would never act in the interests of the Kashmiri people and as it is would continue to remain under constraints imposed by the mother body in India. We therefore, demand the formation of a new Constituent Assembly formed by the peasants and workers of Kashmir which would work first and foremost towards securing the self determination of the Kashmiri people and independence from India. Thereafter, moving towards the full expropriation of all large landed estates and estates of the big Kashmiri bourgeois families and large Indian owned estates without Compensation and nationalization of resources. Whilst, the constituent assembly may be an instrument to attain independence, to ensure freedom it is imperative that the Kashmiri people have control over the life blood of Kashmir, its resources!

For a United Kashmir!

The creation of an independent united Kashmiri republic would then be free to decide its relations with nations bordering it as it deems fit. The slogan of Azaadi must therefore, stand for independence from India as well as Pakistan and China! Simultaneously, we appeal to the Kashmiri people not to have any false illusions on the vague promises of western imperialism. Any promise of support by western powers is necessarily contradictory and hypocritical and must be treated with suspicion. The fact that Obama appealed to India to “resolve” the Kashmir issue was enough to show that they are interested only in maintaining the status quo of occupation. The Indian state would be more than happy to effect such a communal division as it weakens and isolates the Kashmir struggle belittling it to the communal forte of a section of Kashmiri society against another. For the struggle for self-determination to succeed it is imperative that it be carried out as a united struggle embracing each and every section of Kashmiri society and overcome communal divisions imposed by the occupation.

Whilst, the most important immediate demand for the Kashmiri people is independence from Indian occupation, such freedom would be only half won

without freedom from Capitalism as a whole. The Kashmiri struggle therefore needs to progress uninterruptedly from a democratic one to a socialist one. Aiming as its ultimate goal a Socialist Kashmir! United we stand and divided we fall. This is the principle for any successful movement and for any nation to be successful. The question of self-determination of Kashmir isn't the exclusive resolve of the people of Southern Kashmir under Indian occupation but of the whole of Kashmir and all Kashmiri people including those in Northern Kashmir (under Pakistani occupation) as well as Ladakh (under joint occupation of China and India) . For The new Kashmir which would emerge from the freedom movement, division among communal lines would mean death and re occupation. Indeed should the new Kashmir be divided communally between Hindu (South), Muslim (North and Central) and Buddhist (East) it will open up the possibility of a re occupation of Kashmir by India, Pakistan and China. The sacrifices of the Kashmiri people would have gone to waste replacing one oppressor with another. Furthermore, fuelling communal hatred in the hearts and minds of the Kashmiri people only adds to the division of an already divided society.

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Protests at killing of Sardar Arif Shahid



(The following article was written in 2013 by Mehnatkash Tehreek, Pakistan in the aftermath of the assassination of Sardar Arif Shahid, a prominent Kashmiri nationalist. The death of Arif Shahid sparked the first wave of large scale protests in POK.)

Protesters suspect Mr Shahid was killed by Pakistan's intelligence

Protesters have taken to the streets in various parts of Pakistan and Pakistan administered Kashmir, angry at the killing of a pro-independence Kashmiri leader.

Sardar Arif Shahid was shot dead by unidentified men near his home in Rawalpindi on 13-05-2013 (Monday night.) Mr Shahid led the All Parties National Alliance (APNA), which advocates independence from India and Pakistan, as well as being the president of National Liberation Conference (NLC). Both countries claim the region, which is divided between them across a ceasefire line known as the Line of Control. Demonstrations were also held in other cities and towns in Pakistan-occupied Kashmir. Protesters carried banners with slogans against the Pakistani army and the ISI intelligence service, which they blamed for the killing.

'Pool of blood'

Sardar Arif Shahid was taken to a military hospital where he was pronounced dead. Mr Shahid was a vocal critic of Pakistan's role in sending militants to fight a "proxy war" against India in Indian-administered Kashmir. He also criticized Pakistan's policy of treating Kashmir as its "colony".

Sardar Arif Shahid was an outspoken critic of Pakistan's Kashmir policy

The Pakistani government banned him from travelling abroad in 2009, and later confiscated his passport and other identification documents. The Ministry of Interior told a court in December 2012 that his documents had been confiscated due to his "anti-state activities and on the recommendation of the director-general of the ISI intelligence service". Three months ago, police in Rawalpindi registered a case against him for publishing a monthly magazine which it is alleged contained anti-Pakistan material.

Mr Shahid was "the victim of targeted killing by some state actors".

Glimpse on Line of Control

The two countries fought wars over Kashmir in 1947-48, 1965 and 1984. They formalised the present existing ceasefire line as the Line of Control in the Simla Agreement, but this did not prevent further clashes in 1999 in Kargill, which is beyond the Line of Control. India and Pakistan came close to war again in 2002.

The situation was further complicated by an Islamist-led insurgency that broke out in 1989. India gave the army additional authority to end the insurgency under the controversial Armed Forces Special Powers Act (AFSPA). Despite occasional

reviews of the AFSPA, it still remains in force in Indian-administered Jammu and Kashmir. During the period of “operation brasstracks” in which India initiated military action against insurgents, the limited autonomy to Indian-occupied Kashmir under article 370 of the constitution was also abolished.

In the summer of 2010, more than 20 years after the AFSPA was imposed in Jammu and Kashmir, pro-independence public protests erupted, and clashes with Indian security forces left more than 100 people dead. When taking into consideration the fact that both India and Pakistan have a large nuclear arsenal, the stakes seem quite high.

An improvement in relations occurred after 2002, which saw some road and rail communications into Pakistan reopened, but this ended abruptly with the 2008 terror attacks in Mumbai. India blamed Pakistani and Kashmiri Islamists, in particular the Lashkar-e-Toiba group, for the attacks.

For two years dialogue was stalled between both countries till Talks resumed in 2010, and relations slowly started to improve again.

By 2012, with India promising an amnesty to those who took part in the violent protests of 2010 and Pakistan gradually withdrawing financial support from insurgents fighting Indian rule in the Kashmir Valley, many former militants had become convinced of the futility of the armed struggle against the Indian authorities.

Division

The population of historic Kashmir is divided into about 10 million people in Indian-administrated Jammu and Kashmir and 4.5 million in Pakistani-run Azad Kashmir. There are a further 1.8 million people in the Gilgit-Baltistan autonomous territory, which Pakistan created from northern Kashmir and the two small princely states of Hunza and Nagar in 1970.

The government of the Indian state of Jammu and Kashmir has often been led by the National Conference, a pro-Indian party led by the Abdullah political dynasty. Pakistan runs Azad Jammu and Kashmir as a self-governing state, in which the Muslim Conference, PPP, PML(N) NAWAZ SHARIF are playing a prominent role .

The National Conference moved from a pro-independence stance in the 1950s to accepting the status of a union state within India, albeit with more autonomy than other states. The newly formed National Conference government in Kashmir had to eventually deal with an intransigent Indian state which would often resort to manipulating elections to curb the autonomy of the state of Kashmir.

Jammu and Kashmir is diverse in religion and culture. It consists of the heavily-populated and overwhelmingly Muslim Kashmir Valley, the mainly Hindu Jammu district, and Ladakh, which has a roughly even number of Buddhists and Shia Muslims. This region is divided again between India and China with China occupying a vast portion of Aksai Chin as a result of the 1962 war with India.

The Hindus of Jammu and the Ladakhis back India in the dispute, although there is a campaign in the Leh District of Ladakh to be upgraded into a separate union territory in order to reflect its predominantly Buddhist identity. India gave the two districts of Ladakh some additional autonomy within Jammu and Kashmir in 1995.

Kashmir's economy is predominantly agrarian. The important tourism sector in Indian-administered Kashmir was hard hit by the post-1989 insurgency, but has recently bounced back and in 2011 a record 1.1m tourists visited, mainly from India itself. Nevertheless, due to the backward nature of industrialization there remains a very high number of unemployed youth who are the bulwark of discontent in Kashmir today.

Now the ruling classes of India and Pakistan long to strengthen the peace process by the introduction of various trade and transit measures. America's broker role in India-Pakistan relations have revived in importance following India's entry into Afghanistan as a major investor and America's concern over Pakistani cooperation in its Afghan war. This entry has only served to complicate the Kashmir situation and give it an international dimension.

Our political stance

We condemn the assassination of pro-independence and liberal leader and absolutely involve in arrangement of protest in all over regions of Pakistan and Pakistan occupied Kashmir with our program that socialist Federation of Kashmir then south Asia is solution of liberation and independence.

Transitional slogans and demands

- The capitalist state is the weapon in bourgeoisie hand which they utilize against freedom Fighters, Human Rights Activists and Leftists.
- We condemn the vicious Murder of Arif shahid and chant slogan, go back Pakistan and Indian Forces.
- Stop the killing of Kashmiris, balochis and deprived all over the world
- We appeal to all Trade unions, Youth organization, Human Rights Activists, Shopkeepers to be the part of these protests.
- We appeal all national and international pro-independence Liberals and Leftists to condemn this assassination,

This is all the more true for bourgeois international law and the character of the so-called United Nations. It is a symbol of legalistic and diplomatic hypocrisy. Lenin once called the League of Nations a "thieves' kitchen". The United Nations, if anything, is the greatest deceiver of all.

Kashmir is the oldest unresolved dispute on the agenda of the United Nations. It is still unresolved. Many later disputes put to the United Nations have not been resolved either. Two hundred and eighteen resolutions have been passed against the atrocities and the occupation of Palestinian land by the state of Israel. Not one of these resolutions has been implemented.

The recent imperialist invasion of Iraq is a glaring example of the impotence of the UN. The problem is that most conflicts around the world cannot be resolved on a capitalist basis. Hence, as a deviation or a delaying tactic, these politically decadent leaders refer them to the UN. Such is the case with Kashmir. The United Nations is financed by imperialist and reactionary bourgeois states. How could it dare confront them or impose any decision against their vested interests? The UN is simply the gossip club of the rulers of oppressive regimes that rule through an exploitative system. The UN was a rotten compromise between Imperialism and Stalinism in the past, now it is an instrument for justifying and legalising the economic and military aggression of imperialism, especially that of the United States. India and Pakistan both contribute immensely to UN military programs and India in particular has controlling role in the campaign in the Congo in addition to being one of the top 10 funders of the UN.

The liberation of Kashmir will not come from UN resolutions or the charity of the imperialist masters. It will come through the revolutionary struggle of the Kashmiri masses, which they have carried on with such courage and bravery for so long. With all these sacrifices they have a huge treasure of experience of struggle. From this will emerge the exact path to take, in order to achieve their freedom.

The mountainous region of Kashmir has been a flashpoint between India and Pakistan for more than 60 years. Why is Kashmir disputed?

The territory of Kashmir was hotly contested even before India and Pakistan won their independence from Britain in August 1947.

Under the partition plan provided by the Indian Independence Act of 1947, Kashmir was free to accede to India or Pakistan.

The Maharaja, Hari Singh, wanted to stay independent but eventually decided to accede to India, signing over key powers to the Indian government - in return for military aid and a promised referendum.

Since then, the territory has been the spark for two of the three India-Pakistan wars: the first in 1947-8, the second in 1965 and a third in 1984 in which India took control of Siachen.

In 1999, India fought a brief but bitter conflict with Pakistani-backed forces who had infiltrated Indian-controlled territory in the Kargil area.

How dangerous is the Kashmir dispute?

From potentially being one of the most dangerous disputes in the world - which in the worst-case scenario could trigger a nuclear conflict - the recent warming of relations between Delhi and Islamabad has led to less sabre-rattling over the Kashmir dispute.

In 1998 India and Pakistan both declared themselves to be nuclear powers with a string of nuclear tests.

In 2002 there was a huge deployment of troops on both sides of the border as India reacted to **an armed attack on the national parliament in Delhi** the previous December.

India said the attack was carried out by Pakistani-based militants assisted by the Pakistan government - a charge always denied by Pakistan.

Why has there been so much violence been in Indian-administered Kashmir?

Although in recent years **violence in Indian-administered Kashmir has abated**, the causes of the insurgency have not gone away.

Demonstrations still take place regularly in the Kashmir valley

Put simply, many people in the territory - especially in the Muslim-majority Kashmir valley - do not want it to be governed by India. They would prefer to be either independent or part of Pakistan.

The population of the Indian-administered state of Jammu and Kashmir is over 60% Muslim, making it the only state within India where Muslims are in the majority.

The sense of alienation from Delhi is especially to be found among young people in the Kashmir valley, a problem which has been made worse by high unemployment and what many see as heavy-handed tactics from Indian paramilitary forces in stifling their protests.

Although the insurgency today may not be so vigorously fought as it was in the 1990s, the scope for violence to re-surface - **as happened in 2010** - is never far away.

While violent demonstrations and curfews no longer take place on a daily basis, this "tinder box effect" on the streets of Srinagar and other towns in Indian-administered Kashmir - in which angry crowds take to the streets often without much notice - is still a feature of life.

What's changing now?

For much of the 1990s, separatist militancy and cross-border firing between the Indian and Pakistani armies left a death toll running into tens of thousands and a population traumatised by fighting and fear.

Jammu and Kashmir is the only state in India where Muslims are in the majority

While relations in general warmed from 2000 onwards, tension again resurfaced with the **Mumbai (Bombay) attacks of November 2008** - in which gunmen from Pakistan killed 165 people.

But there have been signs over the past decade that things are improving:

- In 2003, the two countries agreed to a ceasefire across the Line of Control (LoC) that divides Indian and Pakistani-administered Kashmir
- In 2006, Pakistan said it stopped all funding for militant operations in Kashmir, ignoring protests by some of the more influential groups
- In February 2010 **India announced an amnesty for fighters from Indian-administered Kashmir**, saying they could return from Pakistani territory
- Early in 2012, Islamabad cut by half the administrative funds it issues to groups that still maintain offices in Pakistani-administered Kashmir
- At the same time it offered a cash rehabilitation package to former fighters to abandon militancy

One thing that has not changed, however, is the Line of Control (LoC) which divides Kashmir on an almost two-to-one basis: Indian-administered Kashmir to the east and south (population about nine million), known by India as Jammu and Kashmir state; and Pakistani-administered Kashmir to the north and west (population about three million), which is labelled by Pakistan as "Azad" (Free) Kashmir. China also controls a small portion of North Kashmir and the bulk of Ladakh province in Aksai Chin.

Are there grounds to hope the Kashmir dispute can be resolved?

India and Pakistan have since February 2010 embarked on a series of confidence building measures and **held regular peace talks**. Both countries say that they are eager to end the dispute over the **contested Siachen Glacier**.

The warming of relations between India and Pakistan has corresponded with less violence in Kashmir

An end to the violence and uncertainty in Kashmir would also be widely welcomed in India and Pakistan - and not only by those weary of the fighting or those who see it as a hindrance to the economic development of the South Asia region.

However, a diplomatic solution has escaped both sides for more than 60 years, and there are no signs of any new proposals yet.

Furthermore, both governments face powerful hardline groups within their own countries who will be carefully monitoring the talks to make sure concessions they deem to be unacceptable are not offered to the other side.

What remains of the insurgency today is led by four main groups:

Lashkar-e-Taiba, Hizbul Mujahideen, Harkatul Mujahideen and the Jammu and Kashmir Liberation Front. All are believed to be losing influence.

Kashmir experts say that the new mood in Indian-administered Kashmir is less supportive of the insurgency and more in favour of civil liberties and human rights.

India says that the way forward is through elections: It says that in recent years people on the Indian side of the territory have voted enthusiastically in assembly and council polls.

In July 2012 evidence of warmer relations between India and Pakistan was highlighted by Foreign Affairs Minister SM Krishna who praised Islamabad for its "new mindset" toward India which he said was "frank and candid".

But problems and suspicions remain. India's army and paramilitary forces insist that a few hundred armed militants are still active.

Kashmir after Article 370 – Blood for Lithium



Kashmiri locals holding lithium ore

(The following article was written in the aftermath of the abrogation of Article 370 of the Indian constitution by the Indian government. The amendment was followed by a full lockdown on Kashmir, increased repression, and the abolition of statehood of Jammu & Kashmir, along with its dismemberment, separating Ladakh out of Jammu & Kashmir.)

Intro :

On the 5th of August 2019, the Modi led BJP government took the unprecedented step of abrogating Article 370 of the Indian constitution. This article was inserted after Kashmir's annexation to India and guaranteed a degree of autonomy to Kashmir, recognizing a limited sovereignty. This exceptional situation for Kashmir was the result of the peculiar conditions under which it was made a part of India. While this 'autonomy' was whittled down over the decade of the 50s and 60s, being rendered a dead letter by the end, the BJP intended to score a symbolic political victory.

Today Kashmir has not only been incorporated to the same level as other states, it has been downgraded from a state to a union territory. In other words, even the limited federal sovereignty that Indian states are accorded to, doesn't apply to Kashmir. To make matters worse, the state of Jammu and Kashmir has been broken up, with Ladakh being separated from the state, and turned into another union territory.

In the immediate aftermath of the passing of the 'Jammu and Kashmir reorganization Act of 2019' was passed, the state was brought under direct central control as a union territory, and an information blackout was imposed. The internet was shut down for months, and hundreds of arrests were made. According to official data, 4000 activists were arrested, including two former chief ministers of the state.

For nearly two years Jammu and Kashmir was placed under lockdown, communications were barred, Kashmir was effectively sealed from the outside world. No journalists were allowed access, internet was blocked, and even after it was partially withdrawn in January of 2020 only certain white listed sites were allowed access with 2G internet. The shutdowns and lockdowns made life hell for the inhabitants of the region, as state authorities clamped down on dissidents, activists, and even mainstream politicians. The state's terror was meant to preemptively suppress dissent in the state fearing widespread unrest following the passage of the reorganization act.

The abrogation of Article 370 was part of a political blitz orchestrated by the BJP government using its new found dominant position following the 2019 general elections. The Kashmir reorganization act was passed on the 5th of August, and three days later in the same session of the parliament, the 4 new labour codes

were passed as well, but remains unimplemented. Unfortunately, the abrogation of article 370 was passed and implemented in full, with the consequences still affecting the wider region.

Today, while the Indian government has secured the peace of the graveyard by terrorising the population of it's occupied section of Kashmir into submission, the people of Pakistan occupied Kashmir are in revolt. They are not protesting for merger with India, as some in the Indian media might have you believe, but for separation from Pakistan. They are revolting against the exploitation of Kashmir's hydro-electric resources, of Kashmiri land for the benefit of the militarist elite, and the exploitation of Kashmir and it's people, for their resources and lands.

The story on both sides of Kashmir is fundamentally the same of two greedy bourgeoisie in competition with each other for the fruits of a beautiful resource rich piece of land, that sits strategically on the edge of Central Asia, and the cross roads of the Himalayas and the silk road. For this prize, both are willing to sacrifice as many of their country's workers and peasants as necessary to keep their hold over Kashmir, the people be damned !

Background :

In the aftermath of Indian independence, the princely states of the Raj, which formed about a third of the total area of South Asia, had three choices. They could join with Pakistan, join with India, or attempt to stay independent. In reality, the third choice was no choice at all , for most of the 500 Princely states, which would be poor, barely industrialized and landlocked. Despite this, some large Princely States, mainly Kashmir, Kalat, and Hyderabad. With the former British Raj being partitioned on religious lines between Hindu majority India and Muslim majority Pakistan, the decision to join either had taken a religious angle. There were some states whose rulers were muslim but with majority hindu populations, such as Hyderabad and Junagarh (modern day Western Gujarat), and others with a majority muslim population but with Hindu rulers, such as Kashmir.

Most of the 500 princely states fell to India, with it's superior military, diplomatic intrigues, and the threat of communist revolution, which had gripped much of the South. The revolt of the masses triggered by the Red Fort Trial, and the Naval mutiny, had electrified the countryside as well as the cities. The princely states were a target, with Travancore and Hyderabad experiencing massive peasant uprisings. Kashmir too, had it's fair share of unrest, led by the left wing petty bourgeois National Conference, led by the so-called Sher-i-kashmir (lion of Kashmir) Sheik Abdullah.

A combination of peasant and agrarian workers protested the harsh rule of the Dogra kings. The kings in turn, had been placed on the throne of Kashmir by the British, as a reward for aiding them in the conquest of the Sikh Empire. The Dogra rulers were not popular, infamous for their exploitative ways, and ruthless rule.

The last chapter of Dogra rule proved to be the bloodiest. In the context of a revolutionary wave throughout the sub-continent, Raja Hari Singh, relied on the Hindutva organization the RSS. To crush the growing movement of peasants and workers under the leadership of the National Conference, he used the state militias and the RSS. According to Pakistani estimates, the number of killed amounted to 50,000, while others notably Ian Stephens of the Statesman, had cited higher estimates, with half a million being either killed or displaced.

Maharaja Hari Singh is celebrated by the Hindutva right wingers in India, for his decision to bring Kashmir into India. The manner in which this was done, or the aftermath of his decision, do not factor into their thinking. The massacres of muslims in Jammu gave Jinnah and Pakistan the perfect excuse to intervene, and attempt to militarily annex Kashmir. This in turn compelled the beleaguered King to beg for Indian assistance, but this would only come in exchange for accession.

Much like Manipur, a state which had declared independence on it's own terms, and even adopted a constitution, the people of Kashmir were not asked whether or not they would join India, it was a monarch, detached from his people, and ruling as a murderous autocrat, who made that decision for them, squeezed between two larger powers.

The 1948 Kashmir war saw massacres on both sides, with the tribal militias armed by the fledgling Pakistani state massacring Hindus and Sikhs in Poonch, in retaliation for the massacres of Muslims in Jammu. The first war between India and Pakistan was fought by an army still led by British officers and generals, on both sides. While the war ended in a stalemate, it was still a political victory for India who secured the most productive parts of Kashmir, Jammu, the valley of Srinagar, and strategic frontier passes, before Pakistan could push further. Pakistan was left with a sliver of Kashmir, ironically called 'azad kashmir', and the mountainous regions of Gilgit and Baltistan, areas which were arid but form a strategic frontier on the border of Central Asia and Western China.

However, the Indian army wasn't the only force in the fight, workers and peasants militias organized by the National Conference bolstered the defense against Pakistan's army and tribal militias.

Kashmir was brought into India, but it had not yet secured it's hold over the territory. It could not deal with Kashmir as it had with the other Princely States, where there was no other armed power attempting to take it over. The question of plebiscite had first been proposed over the state of Junagadh for it's accession into India, it was a means to placate Jinnah and Pakistan over the accession of the Princely States. India was keen about it's position in the world, and it's place in the United Nations, building it's diplomatic reputation in the world. Nehru approached the United Nations to help resolve the question of Kashmir, and by the UNSC (United Nations Security Council) resolution 47 of 1948, it was resolved that status of Kashmir would be decided through an impartial plebiscite.

Later developments would practically nullify this resolution. A ceasefire was achieved, and a shaky peace came to Kashmir, but what was once a united realm lay divided in two parts, one occupied by India and one by Pakistan. As part of the conditions of the plebiscite, Pakistan would withdraw its tribal militias and nationals, and India would withdraw its troops. Neither honoured their commitment. The plebiscite, like so much of the UN, became a dead letter.

It is under these conditions, we must see the decision to incorporate article 370 into the Indian constitution, which at the time of the ascension of the Princely States, had yet to be adopted.

The ascension of Princely States originally required only the realms of defense, communication and foreign affairs under the control of the Indian government. The Princely states were further encouraged to form constituent assemblies, where they may or may not draft their own constitutions. In most cases, the Princely States were unable to set up constituent assemblies, but those states which did (Mysore, Travancore, and Saurashtra Union) adopted the Indian constitution. The state of Kashmir was an outlier in this regard.

In terms of the treaty of accession signed by the King, Kashmir was not compelled to accept the Indian constitution. The state was within its rights to draft its own constitution and decide for itself. Kashmir's leadership formed a constituent assembly and requested only those provisions of the Indian constitution be applied which corresponded to the treaty of accession. The Indian government agreed to this demand, recognizing the popularity of the National Conference and Sheik Abdullah. Thus, article 370 was incorporated into the draft of the Indian constitution as a temporary provision, which granted some autonomy to the state of Kashmir, more than most states of India.

Article 370 embodied six special provisions for Jammu and Kashmir:

1.It exempted the State from the complete applicability of the Constitution of India. The State was conferred the power to have its own constitution.

2.Central legislative powers over the State were limited, at the time of framing, to the three subjects of defence, foreign affairs and communications.

3.Other constitutional powers of the Central Government could be extended to the State only with the concurrence of the State Government.

4.The 'concurrence' was only provisional. It had to be ratified by the State's Constituent Assembly.

5.The State Government's authority to give 'concurrence' lasted only until the State Constituent Assembly was convened. Once the State Constituent Assembly

finalised the scheme of powers and dispersed, no further extension of powers was possible.

6. Article 370 could be abrogated or amended only upon the recommendation of the State's Constituent Assembly.

These provisions, along with the UN resolution on Kashmir calling for plebiscite, contained the seeds of a potential secession of the state from India. However, this was not to be.

Conflicts between the government of Kashmir and that of India came to a head in 1953, when the state constituent assembly took a majority decision to abolish the Kashmiri monarchy. At this time, the Kashmiri monarchy remained as the head of state for Kashmir, a major point of contention between the government of Kashmir and India. Negotiations between India and Kashmir over the fate of the monarchy concluded in the Delhi Agreement of 1952, which Sheikh Abdullah was very slow to implement. The tensions came to a head in 1953, when a resolution was passed by the Kashmiri government to abolish the monarchy. After the abolition of monarchy, Prince Karan Singh, who succeeded his father Maharaja Hari Singh, became the head of state.

Around the time that the USA and UK engineered a coup in Iran, India was conducting a coup of its own in Kashmir. The decision to abolish the monarchy resulted in reactionary protests by pro-monarchist groups in Ladakh and Jammu, led by the Jammu Praja Parishad. Sheikh Abdullah was subsequently removed by the head of state citing 'loss of support from the cabinet'. Immediately thereafter, Sheikh Abdullah was imprisoned in the Kashmir conspiracy case.

According to author A.G. Noorani, the Prime Minister Nehru himself ordered the arrest. Sheikh Abdullah alleged the entire ordeal of his dismissal and arrest were engineered by Nehru. It would not be until 1964 that all charges against Sheikh Abdullah under the Kashmir Conspiracy case would be dropped.

This chapter began what many authors call the erosion of Article 370. The presidential order of 1954 expanded on the terms of the Delhi Agreement, extending Indian citizenship to 'permanent residents' of Jammu and Kashmir. Crucially, the Presidential order extended fundamental rights of the Indian constitution, the jurisdiction of the Supreme Court, it placed financial relations between the central government and the state of Kashmir on the same footing as other states, and most importantly gave the central government the right to declare national emergency in the event of external aggression. Between 1956 and 1994, forty-seven presidential orders were passed over Kashmir eroding the state's autonomy. By the time the article 370 was abrogated, Kashmir's autonomy was a dead letter.

The riches of Kashmir now lay ready to exploit. Soon the biggest prize would be revealed.

The Lithium find :

On the 5th of August 2019, Article 370 of the constitution was abrogated, and the state of Jammu and Kashmir broken up into three union territories. In February of 2023, the union government announced the find of 5.9 million tonnes of lithium in Jammu and Kashmir. This find turned India into the third largest holders of Lithium reserves in the world.

The timing is quite telling, as the Geological Survey of India began it's work around 2018-2019, the same year that the government passed the Jammu and Kashmir reorganization act, abrogating Article 370 of the constitution. Not only did the remnant of Kashmir's autonomy get erased, but it's existence as a state was done away with. Jammu and Kashmir was broken up, and downgraded to union territories, administered directly by the central government, which would now control much of it's bureaucracy, and policing.

It would not surprise us in the least, if this step was undertaken precisely to facilitate lithium mining in the region. For this, the people of Kashmir would suffer a suffocating lockdown, the degradation of civil society and institutions, all for the benefit of Indian capitalists, particularly in the mining sector. The groundwork for this was already laid down by the previous Congress government, but it was the BJP government under Modi that finished the job.

Even before the lithium find, Kashmir was exploited for it's hydro-electric power potential. The Indus water treaty with Pakistan is tailored to ensure the exploitation of Kashmir's water resources, particularly the Indus river water. Kashmir has 20,000 megawatts of hydro-electric power potential. So far it produces only about 10% of this potential power generation at near 2500 megawatts. Even this relatively meagre production is sent to states outside of Kashmir. Most of the state's hydro-electric power is generated by dams run by the National Hydroelectric Power Corporation, which transfers most of the power it generates to other states in North India. This exploitation of the state's natural hydro-electric power is not limited to the Indian side of Kashmir, but finds it's mirror image in Pakistan's exploitation of Kashmir's hydro-electric power.

The result is that while Kashmir is a land rich in resources and potential wealth, much of this is taken away. The Kashmiris do not benefit from their nation's hydro-electric power potential, they do not benefit from their resources, they are left with power cuts while India and Pakistan has power for their capitalists.

Abrogation of art 370 :

The BJP government came to power for a second term in 2019 with the platform of revoking Article 370 and promulgating a Uniform Civil Code. On the latter, it still finds itself struggling, but on the former, it moved like lightning. The BJP's absolute majority in the lower house, and majority in the upper house, ensured the passage of the controversial law, but not without challenge. Even today, multiple petitions are pending before the Supreme Court, challenging the legality of the abrogation of the article.

The immediate aftermath of the abrogation of the law saw protests in Kashmir, and only tepid protests by the main oppositional bourgeois parties in the rest of India. Before the abrogation of the article, Kashmir was placed under emergency, the army was moved in citing 'security threats'. Arrangements were undertaken to crush protests should they arise. However, the sheer speed and weight of the state's oppression made organizing for protests nearly impossible. The uprising the government feared never happened.

Nevertheless, the government prepared every possible tool of repression to answer to unrest, should it emerge. Kashmir saw its internet shut down in 2019, and it remained that way for 18 months, the longest internet shut down in Indian history. A lockdown was imposed in the state between August 2019 and February 2021. Over 2000 people were detained by the state in a pre-emptive crackdown. Opposition leaders were arrested including the Hurriyat leadership, and the National Conference leadership. Security forces had cordoned roads and highways, effectively sealing the state. It even became impossible for the press to access Kashmir. The country was blinded from whatever happened within Kashmir. Even today, the heavy security presence in Kashmir is a reminder of Indian authority over the state.

The presence of the army and paramilitaries ensured the people would be cowed. In the words of the governor, 'even the dogs won't bark'. Years of oppression, betrayals and failures, have created the condition for a sense of defeatism. The abrogation stung like a 'final' defeat in a long struggle. To further consolidate its hold over the region, the central government played out the strategy of divide and rule. Much like the Congress before it, pitting the Muslims against non-muslims of Jammu, Kashmir and Ladakh, ensured the isolation of muslims and the prevention of solidarity emerging between them. It strengthened the hold of the Indian government, while weakening the autonomy of Kashmir.

The separation of Ladakh from Kashmir was aimed at placating the Buddhists of Ladakh, but its downgrading to a union territory has caused conditions to worsen. Protests have been taking place in Ladakh since earlier this year, as promises for jobs and development have proven to be hollow. Now the people of Ladakh are demanding statehood.

Protests in Pakistan Kashmir :

The swiftness and suddenness of the Modi government's move had taken the population by surprise. No less surprised was the establishment in Pakistan, which found itself stymied for action. For decades Kashmir was seen as the holy grail for Pakistan, its conquest being much desired by its leadership.

Pakistan had never truly accepted Indian occupation over Kashmir, neither did it ever accept any pretence of Kashmiri independence. It is why, Pakistan treats its part of Kashmir almost as a colony. The bureaucrats and military officers live large at the expense of the people who mostly live in abject poverty. The conditions in Gilgit Baltistan are worse.

For years the Pakistani bourgeoisie tried and failed to acquire Kashmir from India, appearing to fight for Kashmir's independence while denying any independence to the people of Pakistan occupied Kashmir, which it ironically names 'Azad Kashmir' (meaning Free Kashmir). All of their efforts have failed, and this latest failure comes on the top of a long legacy of failures of the Pakistani bourgeoisie to outmatch India.

The cost of their failures have been borne by the workers and peasants of Pakistan, including those who live in Pakistan's part of occupied Kashmir. This has come in the form of military dictatorships, poverty, economic crisis from excessive military spending, and the continued exploitation for the benefit of a clique of bureaucrats and military officers who live large while the masses of Kashmir live in abject poverty.

The only reason why Pakistan has managed to hold on to their part of Kashmir, and pacify the people of that region, was the promise of freeing the whole of Kashmir from Indian rule, and unifying both occupied parts of Kashmir. This goal seems more distant than ever now. The Pakistani state's feeble response, and culmination of failures through the years, even as it undergoes one of the worst economic crises in its history, has been the spark that set off the protests in Pakistani Kashmir.

The Indian media reports these protests as if a vindication of Indian rule over Kashmir, some go as far as to suggest that the people of Pakistan occupied Kashmir wish to *join* Indian occupation. Nothing could be farther from the truth! The people of Kashmir march against their exploitation at the hands of the Pakistani bourgeoisie through its army and corrupt civilian government. They wish nothing more than the unification of their country, and the independence of Kashmir. It is becoming clearer by the day, that this will not be achieved with Pakistani arms, but by the solidarity of Kashmiris.

Self-determination still valid:

The abrogation of Article 370, and the breakup of the state of Jammu and Kashmir does not itself invalidate the struggle for Kashmiri self-determination. This is

another blow to Kashmiris in a long history of oppression at the hands of the Indian state, held together by coercion, overwhelming military power, and heavy handed policing. The desire for independence for Kashmir is grounded on the aspirations of the people, rooted in the history of class struggle in Kashmir. This has not fundamentally changed.

It is necessary to see through the lies and grasp at the reality of Indian and Pakistani rule in Kashmir. Neither state is after the well being of the people of Kashmir, that includes Kashmir's non-muslim population. Pakistan may pretend to be a 'friend' to the Kashmiris, who balk and suffocate under the weight of Indian occupation. India may pretend to be the 'defender' of Hindus and Buddhists. This is just a ploy to further their agendas. The agenda being the exploitation of the resources of Kashmir, it's hydro-electric power, it's mineral wealth. The people of Kashmir do not figure in this, only the profits and ambitions of their bourgeoisie do.

The revolutionary stand today is more valid than ever. We stand for Kashmiri self-determination. The workers and peasants of India and Pakistan have no reason to identify with their bourgeois governments who cloak themselves in the national flag and order the sons of workers and peasants to go die in the unforgiving mountains of Kashmir. All they have to offer is death, either by poverty and starvation, or the bullet in war. The patriotic illusion is the tool of the oppressor to make the workers of either country a party to the oppression of Kashmir. By supporting Kashmiri self-determination, we intend to break this false and toxic alliance between the working class and bourgeoisie of India and Pakistan, and build the solidarity between the workers and peasants of Kashmir, India and Pakistan !

UNCONDITIONAL SUPPORT FOR KASHMIRI SELF-DETERMINATION !

FULL SUPPORT TO THE PROTESTS IN KASHMIR !

END THE OCCUPATION !

KASHMIRI RESOURCES FOR KASHMIRI PEOPLE !

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IN DEFENSE OF VICTORIOUS MASS MOVEMENT OF KASHMIR



Protesters in POK facing off against military police

(The following article was written in 2024 after the first phase of mobilizations in POK, by Mehnatkash Tehreek, Pakistan)

The partial victory of Mass Movement in Pakistan-administered Jammu Kashmir redirects the historical context. Whenever the popular masses came out in the form of organized social movements, they always force the upper class to bow down. Mass Movement which started on 10 May The popular masses supported the leadership with full courage, From the beginning of the movement, the ruling class tried to use the various tactics to divide masses, the movement was still in its early stages when the state deepened the process of polarization by increasing

the division between the leadership of the traders, but the small traders opened up against pro-state narrative and their leadership, recognizing the value of wrong from wrong and right from right.

They disagreed and were remain part of public action committees. Subsequently ongoing process was repeatedly propagated by the missing rulers of Pakistan-administered Jammu Kashmir under the guise of people's rights; India wants to make the situation worse through its agents, as this was the 76-year-old narrative of the ruling class, which was quickly defeated. On this stand of the ruling class, the popular masses kept saying in one voice that you give us rights; we will not have gone to the meeting of any Indian agent according to you.

Later the leadership of the Joint Mass Action Committee sat in the negotiations called by the government at different times, but the condition of the negotiated committee was remained very poor and with lame excuses, sometimes the members remained absent from the negotiations and sometimes it was said that they have no powers to approve public demands except authorities nominated by Pakistan, Seeing these actions and deceit of the government, the Joint mass Action Committee, in consultation with the sub-mass committees, chose February 5 as a day for the general strike, on which every year the state of Pakistan , on an official scale, hands with people of Jammu Kashmir for solidarity against India, When the importance of this strike was embedded in the consciousness of the popular masses, the government remembered the negotiations and once again invited the Joint Mass Action Committee for negotiations on February 4 to approve the demands and issued a notification accepted some of the demands partially.

Government asked for more time for left over, but when this notification started circulating among the masses through social media, the majority had not only criticized the partial acceptance of these demands but also called for a full strike on February 5. Keen-sighted on this public sentiment and criticism, the leadership, vowing to continue the movements until the demands are met, announced a sit-in in front of the Legislative Assembly of Jammu Kashmir on May 11, which was first reported by the state-run media. It was looking like news, but as the time approached and the momentum of the masses was built. Finally, on the night of May, 9 the state raided the houses of many leaders of the Joint Mass Action Committee and sub-committees from Mirpur Division and arrests was carried out, in response to which JAAC announced a general strike on May, 10 and called protests and rallies. The police created tension and mess across the state.

In the clash where many protestors and police personnel were injured, Sub-Inspector Adnan Qureshi succumbed to his injuries in the town of Islamgarh after being shot in the chest, where he along with other police personnel stopped the rally going to Muzaffarabad via Kotli. When all the caravans entered the Poonch division, at Rawalakot the district government on behalf of high ups once again invited the (JAAC) leadership for dialogues in a cheeky manner and made the masses wait for hours. As the ruling class was visualizing the masses have come in their traditional procession for trip and entertainment where on they receive free transport, good meal In order to make their meetings successful and during the public meeting, disgusted by elite's ideas and speeches which compelled them to back homes, but this is bad luck rulers to understand that the masses

who have been deprived for decades do not come out every time to have fun or show, but their consciousness also develops with the maturity of the state's historical tricks and experiences, they learn from their objective conditions.

It means when the conscious subject in alignment takes the form of tomorrow, being the majority, it goes on to eliminate all the anti-human tactics of the minority. During the march, negotiations started between the ruling class and the leadership of the People's Rights Movement, the people from below had only one demand. As the caravan approached Muzaffarabad, the ground began to crumble under the feet of the ruling.

When the gathering of millions of people, the beating of drums, the youth's Bhangra (dance) revolutionary songs, slogans and the enjoyment with one and other's drinks and food was becoming a discussion of popularity among the people of Pakistan on a large scale through social media. All internet services were immediately suspended, which was difficult for the ruling class to bear. On May 12, as a test, the paramilitary forces sent from Pakistan opened fire on the public, killing 3 youths and injure many others. The people responded back. They were trying to reach the place of firing from mountains, buildings, squares and intersections so that everyone accelerates to testify while the entire scenario was being watched by the ruling class directly through the media. The paramilitary forces also understood the mood of this scene, so they fled there and immediately the ruling class had to accept the public demands.

How to maintain movement gains?

The courage of the people's rights movement not only gave more courage to the people of Jammu Kashmir but also created a sense of collectivity within the people of Pakistan that if popular masses fight together for their rights, the rulers do not have enough power to grab them. The thrill can usurp our social media friends and colleagues who are congratulating the mass of Kashmir for their success and vowing that soon they will start a movement for their rights within Pakistan. Therefore, it is necessary to maintain continuous pressure on the ruling class from the village and town level to maintain the gains of the movement.

The expansions that have been achieved during the movement should not only be shared with each other but with women as well. There should be equally representation from village and town then take up problems of locality along with district level complete agricultural marketplaces and complete general hospitals should be demanded. It is possible when mass committees are consciously become part of the whole process with casting votes for every campaign under democratic centralism. Create possible efforts to make decisions by consensus; otherwise the decision of the majority should be given importance to the minority.

Kept the style of collectivity. This whole process should be done through People's Assemblies which should be started from villages and towns and everywhere an effort should be made to possess the workers of services and production in these mass committees. The workers from different sectors ought to take the responsibilities for workers' committees' campaigns. Propagation should be done

on the importance of an alternative Constituent Assembly by campaigning against the prevailing Pakistan-administered Legislative Assembly of Jammu Kashmir which stops anyone to participate in elections with the approach right of self-determination by partial constitution of 1974 , within each People's Assembly. This is the way to respond to the tricks of the ruling class while maintaining the success of the movement!

Humility is our conscious weapon

Pakistan-administered Jammu Kashmir is a colony of Pakistan, so it is important to include the element of humility and resistance in the movement for reforms, freedom and autonomy. Due to the success of the current people's rights movement, many middle-class intellectuals and narrow nationalists are seen mocking the workers of Pakistan directly or through social media, saying that they should fight like Kashmiris, etc., due to the partial success of Jammu movement. We need to understand that the situation in Pakistan is not exactly in the reactionary period but consciously the pre-revolutionary situation has started.

The people have understood that the Pakistan ruling is completely incapable of providing any kind of public relief. Pakistan's influence in the global market is zero. Unemployment has become a permanent problem. The people at the bottom are preparing that the end of the prevailing ruling state which was first seen in the general election against the establishment, but it can be seen in the squares and intersections in the coming periods. Currently the slogans against the power of the establishment have become popular.

Repression against the oppressed nationalities can be advanced with end of inflation and privatization. If popular resistance starts on a large scale, it will not stop so quickly. Which has started first from Balochistan, then Gilgit-Baltistan and now Kashmir? At this time, it is necessary that the leadership of the Jammu Kashmir People's Rights Movement comes in defense of its achievements, appeals to the peoples of oppressed nationalities and working against oppression and fundamental rights infringed in Pakistan.

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STATEMENT ON THE TERROR ATTACK IN KASHMIR



An Indian Soldier keeping vigil on Pahalgam valley in the anniversary of the terror attack

(The following was a joint statement issued by Mehnatkash Tehreek (Pakistan) and Mazdoor Inquilab (India) against the use of terror by both sides to further strategic goals on Kashmir)

On the afternoon of 22nd of April, nearly 26 civilian tourists were gunned down by militants claiming to be of the 'The Resistance Front of Kashmir' (TRF), an offshoot of the Lashkar-e-taiba. The tourists were mostly Hindu visitors from the Indian mainland, and mostly Hindu. Eye witnesses have claimed that the militants asked the tourist's names and religion before killing them. Those who were Hindu and could not recite the Islamic Kalma, were killed on the spot. This aspect of the attack has been hyped up by a right wing media eco system to emphasize the

religious nature of the attack and the attackers. Forgotten, is the heroic sacrifice of a guide who fought the militants and saved a dozen of the tourists, and many other local Kashmiri muslims who helped bring injured tourists to hospitals.

Since this ghastly incident, social media has been flooded by right wing Hindutva propagandists demanding genocide of Muslims, targeting Kashmiri Muslims. The studios of private mainstream news channels are calling for war with Pakistan. Among the political establishment both the ruling party's leaders and the leaders of the bourgeois opposition, have called for 'unity' behind 'any action taken in retaliation'. In this jingoistic din, any calls for accountability, is being lost.

It is important to question how such a militant attack can keep happening in one of the world's most militarized regions. Modi had claimed that terrorism had been ended by demonetization, and the abrogation of Article 370 nullifying Kashmir's autonomy, yet they kept happening! We must ask, how is it that no security personnel were present anywhere near the site of the attack, and it took 3 hours for any help to come ! Were it not for the locals risking their lives to save the tourists more would have died from injuries.

Even as the attack was unfolding, Modi was cutting deals for his cronies in Dubai. On his return, he was in full election mode, promising to retaliate against Pakistan from Bihar, a state which is set to go to elections soon. West Bengal, another state which will see elections the next year, is also targeted with anti-Muslim propaganda by Hindutva forces.

On the Pakistani side, reactionary military leaders like Asim Munir invoked Islamist sentiments, aiming his vitriol at India and Hindus. Pakistan occupied Kashmir has witnessed massive protests against the exploitation of their people and resources by the military and bureaucracy of the Pakistani state. The Baloch people continue to struggle against the dominance of Pakistan, the resistance is taking the form of protests, strikes, and sometimes in violence against the Pakistan military. The rulers of Pakistan hold no sympathy for the people of Kashmir and do not hold their best interests.

Both India and Pakistan view Kashmir as an object of conquest. Kashmir has enormous hydel power potential, it has one of the world's largest lithium deposit, and it is one of the prime saffron growing regions of the world. Kashmir can become a gateway to Central Asia for India. For these reasons, both of these powers rule Kashmir in an undemocratic and militaristic manner. The ruling elite of India and Pakistan are more than willing to exploit their own people who barely live above poverty level, to fund massive bureaucratic and military infrastructures.

The truth is that Kashmir is a frontline of the contest between two greedy exploitative bourgeois countries. Tens of thousands of Kashmiris have been killed by the toxic contest between Pakistan and India. Both sides want the land of Kashmir, but not their people. The capitalists sitting in Delhi and Islamabad have turned the Paradise on Earth into a killing field.

WE STAND FOR KASHMIR'S SELF-DETERMINATION!

The land of Kashmir belongs to the people of Kashmir, along with its resources, rivers, and heritages. Neither can India invoking notions of 'Akhand Bharat' nor Pakistan clamouring for 'Two nation theory' can hold any claim to it. Delhi and Islamabad have taken it upon themselves to decide what is best for Kashmiris, in reality only acting for the best interests of their own elites, whether it's the military and bureaucracy of Islamabad or Adani, Tata and Ambani groups in India. Both nations silence the voices of Kashmiris.

Since the abrogation of Article 370, India has turned Kashmir into a prison for its people. The illusion of normalcy fed by rising tourism, and investments from corporations, masks the reality of thousands of people being locked up by the police and paramilitary who act with impunity, and are immune to prosecution. That this oppression has failed to bring any kind of real peace to the valley, has been made clear by the attack on the 22nd.

The Indian government has not only erased Kashmir's limited autonomy, it has also erased its existence as a separate state, separating Ladakh from Kashmir, and converting the state into a Union territory, placing it under the direct authority of the capital. Kashmiri's rights are being trampled, helped on by a pliant comprador bourgeoisie in the likes of Omar Abdullah and Farooq Abdullah. To this we call for all the rights of Kashmir to be restored, along with its statehood and the reinstatement of Kashmiri autonomy as was held in Article 370!

Rather than hold the rulers accountable, Hindutva forces online and in media houses, have been harping on the fact that the militants profiled the religions of the victims. They have been using this incident to incite people against Kashmiri Muslims. They are blind to the rallies of Kashmiris calling for peace and communal unity, they have tried to bury the stories of Kashmiri Muslims helping the tourists, saving their lives. They try justify the continued domination of Kashmir.

We say let the people of Kashmir decide Kashmir's destiny, whether it should remain independent or join either India or Pakistan, and we say this for Kashmir on both Indian Occupied Kashmir and Pakistan Occupied Kashmir! It has been nearly 8 decades, Kashmiris have seen the true face of 'democratic' India and the true face of the Pakistani military regime which claims to see Kashmiris as brothers, only to exploit them as brutally and harshly as the Indian side.

The workers and peasants of India and Pakistan, have no interest in seeing their class brethren in Kashmir being exploited and suppressed. It is our duty to rally the working class to support the cause of self-determination, and stand against the divisive hatred peddled by the bourgeoisie of both Pakistan and India.

WE DENOUNCE THE CALLS TO WAR !

The bourgeoisie in India have rushed to hide their own failures. They cannot guarantee basic amenities for their own people, they cannot improve the livelihoods of the vast majority of Indians, and their lies are constantly punctured by reality. To hide their failures, they thump their chest and call for war with Pakistan. In retaliation to the militant's attack, India has unilaterally suspended

the Indus water treaty, a treaty which already heavily in favour of India. To this, Pakistan has decided to shut it's airspace for India and shut trade.

In the morning of the 25th artillery shelling has been reported across the India Pakistan border. All the while, the BJP and RSS' army of Hindutva goons on social media keep crying hoarse against Muslims and Pakistan. They want to punish all Muslims for the actions of a handful of fanatics. The foreign ministry of Pakistan has gone on record to state that any action from India will face 'massive retaliation'. Both India and Pakistan are nuclear armed countries, fielding massive armies and air forces. A war between the two would be disastrous, not just for the people of the region, but for the world at large.

We denounce this war mongering! The bourgeoisie which cannot feed it's people wish to play games with the lives of workers and peasants. It is not enough that they have exploited us into poverty, they now wish to satisfy their bloodlust with the deaths of working class and peasant sons and daughters on the battlefield. The ruling classes of both countries will cry about 'National Unity' at this time, and drive the exploited to slaughter one another. Sitting in their air conditioned rooms, they will watch the carnage from afar, while workers and peasants die in a pointless war killing each other.

All the while, the war will become an excuse for the rulers in both countries to terrorize minorities. Dissidents will be arrested, minorities will be displaced and terrorized, the bit of bourgeois democracy which remains in either country will be torn down. All will be justified in the name of nationalism, and religion.

FOR WORKING CLASS UNITY AGAINST BOURGEOIS REACTION!

When the bourgeoisie goes to war, it is the working class and peasantry who suffers. The poor die for the wars of the rich. This becomes brazenly clear over Kashmir, where Indians and Pakistanis have been whipped up into nationalist frenzy for the wars of the generals and corporations, all of whom want to suppress Kashmiris and exploit their land.

Every act of bourgeois war is an act of violence against the working class. To this, we must reply with working class unity.

Today, as the threat of nuclear war looms on the sub-continent, only the working class can bring about peace, and by that we mean a just peace. Self-determination for Kashmir is the cornerstone of such a just peace.

We must march united, against the schemes of the Modi government wishing to divide us between Hindu and Muslim, and against the schemes of the Pakistani military which whips up reactionary sentiments to wage war.

DOWN WITH WARMONGERS!

HINDU MUSLIM UNITY!

NO TO WAR! LONG LIVE CLASS UNITY!

FOR KASHMIRI SELF-DETERMINATION!

DOWN WITH HINDUTVA! DOWN WITH PAKISTAN ARMY!

Kashmir war and the threat of a world war

INDIA-PAKISTAN

India strikes Pakistan

The Pakistani military says Indian missile attacks hit six cities in Pakistan and Pakistan-administered Kashmir early on May 7. India said it struck nine sites. The attacks killed at least eight people and wounded more than 35, according to Pakistan.



Intro :

The abrogation of Article 370 of the Indian constitution was celebrated by the Modi government as a great nationalist victory. This amendment, which ended Kashmir's limited autonomy, was presented as the change that would bring lasting peace to Kashmir, prosperity would soon follow. Instead, it turned

Kashmir overnight into a giant prison, with thousands being arbitrarily arrested, and thrown into prisons, internet and mobile communication suspended, and entry into the state severely restricted. Eventually, Kashmir's existence as a separate state was erased, Ladakh was cut out of the state, and the two new states born from this separation were turned into Union territories, now directly under the administration of the national capital. It is important to remember this context, because the resentment that grew from these actions, led directly to the developments this year.

On the 22nd of April a terror attack took place in Kashmir's Pahalgam district, where 26 tourists were killed by militants of 'The Resistance Front'. The attack on innocent civilians shocked India, and became fuel for the right wing Hindutva government and its pliant media to cry for war. Since then, India began a series of escalatory steps against Pakistan, beginning with the suspension of the Indus water treaty, the sudden stoppage of river water from its dams on the Chenab river. Pakistan responded by shutting its airspace to Indian planes, to which India retaliated by doing the same. Both sides braced for military attacks which would inevitably follow from this.

In the wee hours of the night on the May the 7th, the Indian air force, navy and army coordinated an attack covering nine targets deep within Pakistan, claiming that these were terrorist bases. The attack conducted by India's new Rafale jets, caused widespread destruction and inflicted dozens of civilian losses on Pakistan. Whether at all any terrorists were killed in these attacks will remain a mystery, but since then the Indian media's boasts have not ceased, claiming that 900 'terrorists' were killed. This was followed by indiscriminate shelling by Pakistan, causing yet more loss of lives. The 26 who were killed in the terror strike received round the clock coverage from Indian media, but the poor farmers whose lives were lost in the border skirmishes have been reduced to faceless numbers, unworthy of prime time coverage.

While Pakistani officials and the official press jump with joy over the alleged downing of five Indian fighter jets, the Indian media are giving round the clock triumphant coverage of the air strikes into Pakistan. The civilians killed by India's strikes receive no sympathy from the Indian press, and the Indian government tries everything to dehumanize the average Pakistani. At the same time, mock civil defence drills were conducted to normalize a state of war.

For the four days that followed India's air strikes on Pakistani soil, both sides continued an intense exchange of missile barrages and artillery shelling costing dozens of lives in India and Pakistan. By the 11th of May, Pakistan had deployed its army to the border, ready for ground operations, just as India was getting ready for greater military actions. Suddenly, on the 11th of May, everything went quiet, as Trump declared that he had supposedly negotiated a ceasefire between India and Pakistan. Till now, this shaky ceasefire has held, with one violation from the Pakistani side resulting in shelling in the Indian occupied Kashmir border. This ceasefire has momentarily stopped the possibility of escalation into outright war, and we are brought back to the situation which persisted on the immediate aftermath of India's unilateral suspension of the Indus Water Treaty.

It is no exaggeration to say, that South Asia is perhaps at the most dangerous point yet, in its recent history, as two nuclear armed nations toy with the

possibility of conventional war. It is by no means certain that such a conventional war would remain limited to conventional means, and would not advance to an all-out nuclear war, which would likely destroy civilization as we know it, and may drag the whole world into a third world war.

The Kashmir conflict :

To truly understand the conflict over Kashmir, we must go to the roots of the problem. The conflict is in fact one of the most toxic legacies of British colonialism in South Asia. Today, Kashmir has become the frontline not just of two powerful militaries facing off against each other, but the frontline of a conflict between two toxic reactionary ideological currents. On the one hand, we have reactionary Islamism enshrined in the militarized Pakistani state rooted in the two nation theory, and on the other side we have Hindutva that has taken the reins of power in India. It is important to understand how this situation came about.

By 1930s, Britain's hold over India had weakened to the point, where it needed to delegate more powers to Indians to continue its rule. The British increasingly relied on the services of large reactionary communal organizations to counter the influence of secular parties. Foremost among these reactionary organizations was the Muslim League and the Rashtriya Swayamsevak Sangh. While the Congress party protested India being dragged into another world war, there were no plans for a nationwide mobilization, like the past 'satyagrahas'. Events would force them to mobilize a general mobilization in 1942, under the Quit India movement.

Over the course of the 40s India underwent a pre-revolutionary mobilization, first with the Quit India Movement, then the Naval uprising and youth uprising in 1946. However, with the Congress Party outlawed and its leadership jailed, the British government gave compliant reactionary organizations like the RSS and the Muslim League, supported by the Deobandi sect. Together they succeeded in polarising India along communal religious lines of Hindu and Muslim. Events culminated in the partition riot of 1946 beginning with Calcutta. Soon, violence spread across the gangetic plains and reached Punjab where the worst killings took place.

The fires of communal hatred eventually reached the princely state of Kashmir. Though having a largely Muslim population, Kashmir was ruled by the Dogra Hindus since the second Anglo-Sikh wars of 1849. The Dogras were harsh against their subjects, and Hari Singh would be no exception.

Much like the rest of the sub-continent, Kashmir saw agitations by peasants, workers and particularly share croppers. In the period between 1946 and 1947, the Kashmiri monarchy embarked on a programme of genocide against the largely Muslim Gujjar peasantry. This was not simply because of their religion, but as a reaction against the growing power of peasants and workers in the princely state. The power of the monarchy was threatened, and it responded violently in the context of partition.

Little known is the fact that the RSS were actively involved in this genocide of Muslims in Kashmir, which likely costed the lives of 200,000. India and Pakistan both staked their claim to Kashmir, for Pakistan, it was Kashmir's Muslim majority character that made it 'natural' to join Pakistan. For India, the fact that Kashmir was ruled by a Hindu monarch was emphasized. However, Maharaja Hari Singh chose neutrality and independence.

Pakistan decided to strike first, mobilizing a force of tribal militia to conquer Kashmir from the King. The violence of the monarchy against Muslims was reciprocated by the Pakistan backed Islamic militias, who killed thousands of Hindus in Poonch and Mirpur. Seeing his forces disintegrate against the onslaught of the tribal militia, the Maharaja finally petitioned to accede to India in late 1947. Thus, not three months into it's independence, India and Pakistan were locked in their first war, over Kashmir.

The Indo-Pakistan wars :

India and Pakistan have fought four wars until now. Of these three wars were fought over Kashmir, the first in 1947, the second in 1965, and the third in 1999.

The annexation of Kashmir was not something that happened in a vacuum. The partition had left India dislocated, but with the peninsular provinces and the heartland intact. Most of the industries of the British Raj, the large urban centres, and most military assets, went to India. Pakistan had two resourceful provinces in East Bengal, and West Punjab, and a strategic port in Karachi, but these were not enough for a fledgling republic like Pakistan to match against India.

As of 1947, the only area for expansion for these two young and hungry capitalist nations, were the princely states. At the height of the Raj, about one third of the territories of the Raj were comprised of 500 princely states, some which were large and resourceful like Kashmir and Hyderabad, and others which were as big as a small town like Satara. On the eve of independence the princely states were besieged by peasant rebellions, and the threat of outright military annexation, either by India or Pakistan. The only realistic choice was accession to one or the other. Yet, Hyderabad and Kashmir sought to stay independent.

With India having taken most princely states, Pakistan was left with only two options for expansion.

To it's West was the state of Kalat, and to the North East, was Kashmir. Having lost vital states like Junagarh which was ruled by a Muslim nawab, the Muslim majority islands of Lakshadwip, and every princely state in the East, Jinnah believed he could not afford to lose Kashmir too. This state sat on the headwaters of the Indus River, vital for Pakistan's agriculture, it provided a land border with China, and could become a link to Central Asia, thus vital for Pakistan's future trade. For India,

Kashmir would be valuable for it's resources, it's location, and it's use as a leverage against Pakistan.

With the events around the partition, the King's actions against Muslim peasantry, and his desire to stay independent and neutral, the stage was set for the first India-Pakistan war. The Pakistan army intervened indirectly, with tribal militias

organizing an assault on the King's feeble forces, swiftly driving him off from the Gilgit region, and threatening Srinagar itself. The situation only stabilized in favour of the Kashmir's monarchy, when the Indian army intervened.

Over the rest of the year the two armies fought each other to a stalemate. This war was marked by

British commanders leading the armies of both countries, which at the time were still loosely tied to Britain as two independent Dominions. The soldiers and victims of the war were Indian, but the command and material were British. The insulting symbolism of this war has been largely forgotten.

The stalemate at the military front, led to the stalemate at the political front, where neither India nor Pakistan could find a common ground to resolve the dispute. India's Prime Minister Nehru sought to take the matter to the United Nations in the hopes of resolving the dispute. This was not to be, and the UN resolution on Kashmir which mandated the holding of a popular referendum to decide Kashmir's future, has since become a dead letter.

The frontlines of the war remains largely intact today, eventually becoming the border between India and Pakistan, following territories both sides grabbed over the course of the war. This was the end of the first India-Pakistan war, and the first war over Kashmir, it would not be the last.

Encouraged by India's poor showing in the 1962 war with China, Pakistan then under a military dictatorship, attempted to settle the Kashmir issue through military means once more. Operation Gibraltar was conceived by the Pakistani military to oust Indian occupation forces by sparking a revolt in Kashmir. This plan failed spectacularly, but prompted the Indian government to respond militarily. The 1965 Indo-Pakistan war ensued, the second time India and Pakistan would fight over Kashmir.

The Pakistani army modernized with the help of the United States, and the Indian army which had just begun its own modernization programme, would clash across the plains of Punjab, and the mountains of Kashmir. This war would see one of the largest tank battles since the Second World War. Despite gains by India, the war ended in a stalemate, and a ceasefire negotiated with the help of the Soviet Union and the United States of America. The war was costly, ending a period of economic growth in Pakistan, and plummeting the growth of India's economy that year. The cost of the Kashmir war was borne by everyone in South Asia. This war also saw the first time that the United States of America put its stamp on the Kashmir dispute.

The war achieved no resolution politically, but did change the military situation in India's favour and revealed a major weakness in Pakistan's military capabilities. Exhausted by the fighting Pakistan was left with only 2 weeks of ammunition, before a ceasefire was declared. India's military modernization would continue, together with deepening of its relations with the Soviet Union. At the same time, Pakistan entered a period of political and economic crisis which would culminate in the Bangladesh liberation war of 1971. The annihilation of the Pakistani navy, air force, and the crippling of its army left India as the undisputed military and political hegemon of the region.

The war resulted in the Simla Agreement of 1972, which sought to regulate how India and Pakistan would approach the question of Kashmir, seeking to convert the ceasefire line of 1971 to an international border. This Agreement was placed on suspension following the military escalation in May of 2025.

The military dominance secured in 1971 helped secure Indian hegemony over South Asia. Not long after the victory in the 1971 war, India acquired nuclear weaponry, and tested its first nuclear bomb in 1974, putting India in the group of a handful of nations with the ability to develop nuclear warheads. This changed the dynamic of South Asian wars forever, and from here on out, Pakistan would scramble to acquire the same technology. The future wars in South Asia would be fought under the nuclear umbrella.

The year 1999 would mark the beginning of what has been the modern era of the Kashmir conflict. Two important events took place preceding the Kargil war, the beginning of the insurgency in Kashmir in 1989, and Pakistan's acquisition of nuclear weapons in 1998.

By 1987 Indian control over its occupied part of Kashmir had been largely secured. The national conference, which was once the main fighting organization of the Kashmiris had capitulated completely to the Congress party led India. The elections that year were heavily rigged to ensure India's pliant collaborators, the National Conference under Farooq Abdullah would win. This would not be the first time elections were rigged to ensure a favourable election to Indian interests, but this would be the first time that such rigging would lead to a large popular armed insurgency, led at first by the secular Jammu Kashmir Liberation Front (JKLF).

The Indian response to the uprising in January that year was heavy handed. Operation brass tacks saw the deployment of hundreds of thousands of troops to Kashmir, vicious repression ensued which costed dozens of civilian lives. This simply added fuel to the fire, by 1990 Pakistan back islamist groups with battle hardened veterans of the Soviet Afghan war entered the scene, and changed the character of the insurgency from one that was chiefly nationalist to one that became increasingly dominated by Islamist reactionaries. The insurgency caused an exodus of Kashmiri pandits, and gave the Hindutva reactionaries in India a permanent weapon to demonize Kashmiri Muslims and Indian Muslims more generally.

The efforts of the Indian state failed to crush the insurgency in Kashmir. At the same time India underwent a period of political and economic chaos as the Congress party's hegemony crumbled, and a balance of payments crisis compelled India to take IMF loans and open its economy. The then fledgling BJP government had been in power 1 year, when the Pakistan army under General Musharraf drew up plans to settle the Kashmir question by military means. The result of this planning was operation Badr. The objective being to take the strategic town of Kargil in the Ladakh district, outflank Indian positions in Siachen, and force the Indians to negotiate a settlement on Pakistan's terms.

The Pakistan army undertook this operation under the guise of militants being equipped largely with small arms, no aerial backup or heavy artillery, fighting entrenched Indian positions at unfathomable heights near the Siachen glacier.

The war costed nearly 600 Indian lives and allegedly up to 5000 Pakistani soldiers' lives. Yet, worse could have happened.

Towards the end of the war, Pakistan began deploying nuclear warheads to forward positions, threatening its use on India. Against this, India prepared at least 5 nuclear tipped ballistic missiles as part of its overwhelming second strike doctrine. None in India or Pakistan knew at the time, how close the two states had come to a nuclear conflict. It would be the first time since the end of the cold war that the threat of a nuclear conflict had reared its head.

This threat of nuclear war remains, as India and Pakistan stare down at another potential war.

The effects of the rise of India :

From independence to 1971 marked the rise of India's political and military power over the region. By the early 1970s India had secured military hegemony over South Asia. With the acquisition of nuclear weaponry in 1974 India brought in the nuclear angle to its conflict with Pakistan. From the 1980s India's economic growth started to take off. The collapse of Indian state capitalism and the Congress system did not break the country or weaken it, but created conditions to expand more rapidly than ever. The rise of Indian capitalism has allowed it to convert political and military hegemony into economic hegemony in the region.

Pakistan has been locked in competition with India since its birth, whether it was the scramble for the Princely states territories, or the mutually destructive military race with India. While India had the vast resources of its hinterland and established industrial centers like Bombay and Calcutta, Pakistan had to compensate by the more ruthless exploitation of East Bengal, Balochistan and its share of Kashmir. The competition eventually compelled it to invest in the second military modernization in the 80s, culminating in the acquisition of nuclear weaponry in 1998.

The same year, the newly elected BJP government conducted India's second nuclear test in Pokhran. This marked a turn in the long standing conflict between India and Pakistan, with India's then existing military hegemony ended, and all out nuclear war becoming a very real possibility. It was in these conditions that the Kargil war was fought.

India's victory in the war did not result in immediate peace, with Pakistan continuing its strategy of trying to destabilize India through state sponsored Islamic reactionary organizations. The first decade of the 21st century was marked by terror attacks across the country, but with particular intensity in Kashmir. This strategy failed to destabilize India or thwart its rising economic power. The gulf between India and Pakistan only grew over this period, with India's GDP rising from 5 times that of Pakistan, to 11 times that of Pakistan today.

The Islamist terror attacks did however, give the Indian capitalists an excuse to build a surveillance state, tighten its security forces, increase repression on Kashmir, and give the Hindutva reactionaries a platform to build their politics on. India's economic power continued to grow, and with its hunger for resources.

Indian corporations became a major force in Africa, South East Asia, and Europe. Of course, it was South Asia that was the main focus of Indian power, its continued military modernization went hand in hand with its push into the Indian hinterland, where India conducted a war against its own people for the benefit of mining capital and steel industry.

With India's hold over Indian Occupied Kashmir stabilizing again, the state was opened up for investments in hydel power, and infrastructure. For a time, relations improved between India and Pakistan, but there was no resolution in sight. As the world economic crisis in 2008 hit India, the Congress party, which seemed poised to rebuild its hegemony over India collapsed. A wave of strikes, protests and mobilizations between 2010 and 2014 brought down the grand old party of India once more, and it seems in a permanent way.

Indian capital shifted its preference from the secular Congress party, to the Hindutva BJP. Indian capital had been expanding both internally and externally, and they chose a party that promised to deliver 'growth' at any cost. The BJP got to work strengthening surveillance, increasing repressive security laws, undermining the parliament and democracy, eventually culminating in the abrogation of Article 370, destroying the last vestiges of autonomy in Indian Occupied Kashmir.

This opened up a new chapter in the Kashmir conflict, and brought India and Pakistan back on the path of open conflict. This development did not happen out of the blue, nor did the coming of the BJP.

The material conditions which gave rise to the BJP and the emergence of Hindutva ideological dominance in India are rooted in the rise of Indian capitalism. The engine of Indian capitalism is the ruthless proletarianization of its vast population, the more thorough exploitation of the resources of the Indian hinterland, together with constant sophistication of its military machine.

The rise of Indian capitalism, brings it into competition with other imperialistic forces in the region and beyond, chiefly that of China and US imperialism. The political and military contest against the United States has been largely resolved in India's favour in the 1970s, first with the independence of Bangladesh and the destruction of the Pakistani armed forces, and second with the acquisition of nuclear weapons.

Indo-US competition therefore takes a backseat to India's contest with China. Despite China having a massive advantage over India in economic and military power, India remains a force that can challenge China. This takes the most overt form in its conflict with Pakistan over the control of Kashmir.

Pakistan had historically been a US ally in the region, a pivot against the Soviet Union, then as a strategic base for influence in South Asia and Central Asia. Now, with the United States burying its hatchet with India, Pakistan is compelled to rely almost exclusively on China. Today, Pakistan's rulers have turned their country into an extension of Chinese military power. China is invested in containing or limiting India's rise, and Pakistan seeks to ensure that Indian absolute hegemony would be undone.

In retaliation not only is India building up its military power becoming the largest arms importer in the world, it is building alliances with China's rivals, particularly Japan, Vietnam and the USA. The conflict over Kashmir is no longer limited to South Asia alone, nor is it a matter that will be limited to India and Pakistan. This is a flashpoint of a much wider conflict involving the emerging superpower of China and an emerging imperialist power in India.

How the conflict can escalate : (Ongoing escalation, and their impact, and hypothetical scenario of what is likely to happen, the possibilities of a world war, the US role in Kashmir)

The mutual military attacks between India and Pakistan did not escalate to an all-out war. A ceasefire was declared which brought fighting to a halt, allegedly mediated by Trump and his cabinet. The ceasefire comes after a large scale aerial battle between India and Pakistan, followed by massive missile strikes by the former on Pakistan army and air force bases. It is possible that both forces were readying their nuclear arsenal, and were about to deploy ground troops to the border.

We are fortunate that the worst did not come to pass, but there is no reason to be complacent of the present scenario. The chain of events from the terror attack on the 26th of April and the escalatory attacks on May 7th show us a preview of how a war could potentially start. Historical conflicts between India and Pakistan show a pattern of how external powers may act, either to prolong the conflict or expand it.

The military response to a terror attack was not new, the BJP government had conducted air strikes in Balakot in 2019. This was in response to an attack on Indian paramilitary CRPF in Pulwama by militants of the Jaish - e - Mohammed which killed dozens of Indian troops. The Indian air strikes were met with Pakistani retaliation which resulted in the downing of an obsolete Indian aircraft and the capture of a pilot, who was subsequently returned back. By all metrics the Indian air strikes were a military and tactical failure, but it was a great political success for the BJP who used this to showcase strength, and mobilize their reactionary base. The propaganda around the air strikes, helped the BJP secure a super-majority in parliament.

The May 7th air strikes were designed to be similar to Balakot, but on a much larger scale, attacking alleged terrorist infrastructure along the border. Whether or not any of their targets had military value, the Indian air force launched an overwhelming air and missile attack on Pakistan, which was again met with retaliation from the Pakistan air force. This retaliation resulted in at least one advanced Indian Rafael fighter jet downed allegedly by a Chinese built JC-10 fighter jet. The escalation did not stop there, over the next four days, both sides manoeuvred their troops, India continued intense missile and artillery attacks along the border, dozens of civilians on either side were killed.

This escalation was unprecedented. Not since the Kargil war, has the possibility of war in the sub-continent come as close as it did in the first two weeks of May this year. This could have happened precisely because of the political conditions in both India and Pakistan today, with a Hindutva reactionary government in India,

and the military in charge of Pakistan. India's ruling BJP seeks a way reverse their waning hegemony over Indian politics by using military aggression to mobilize their reactionary base. This succeeded initially, but petered out once ceasefire was announced. It is almost certain that they would try this again.

On the other hand, the Pakistani military sought to legitimize its deeply unpopular rule. The military escalation by the BJP essentially handed them a political victory on a platter. The threat of war could make the Pakistani army point to the external enemy to distract from domestic problems, a failing economy, and the strengthening Baloch Liberation Movement.

As unexpected as the military escalation was, equally unexpected was the sudden announcement of a ceasefire. It is highly unlikely that Trump or his cabinet had a major role to play in this, it was the Saudis who kept up mediation efforts throughout the crisis.

Ultimately, a ceasefire was accepted, but the terms or conditions remain a mystery. The reality is that India had very little reason to accept any ceasefire, despite Pakistan and China's calls for de-escalation. It is likely that the next round of military escalation, which is all but inevitable if the BJP gets another term, will not end until all-out war, with large scale ground operations becoming inevitable.

The greatest likelihood for such an operation may be around March or May of 2026 when the Bihar and West Bengal elections take place, or in 2029 when the national elections take place. If the Balakot fiasco is anything to go by, the BJP will attempt to showcase strength by making a target of Pakistan. So far, the Indian military has been a pliant partner in the political manoeuvrings of the BJP, going along with any escalatory attack they have devised. The Pakistan army won't stand down. In the face of an Indian air strike, or incursion, they will respond with greater force, just as they did during the Balakot strike and May 7th. It is essential for the Pakistan army to show that it can protect its citizens, even if they can't, even if their policies directly contribute to a conflict in the first place.

For the Pakistan army, war is a political gift, even if it becomes an economic nightmare. While India would be advantaged by a long term attrition war, Pakistan's armed forces desires a quick and relatively cheap conflict, with limited aims and limited wins, which it can then spin as a victory for the domestic audience. An attrition war would benefit India's ruling party, which can then utilize the war to dismantle more democratic spaces within the country, clamp down harder on protests, and dissidence.

As explained above, the war in Kashmir is one front in a larger theatre of inter-imperialist competition, between India and China on the one hand, and between China and the United States on the other. India is increasingly aligning itself with the US led bloc within Asia, while also remaining aligned with Russia and Iran, all in an effort to surround and contain China's rise. Likewise China is investing heavily in Pakistan as the pivot against India.

A war with Pakistan can then expand into a larger war across the Asian continent bringing in the superpowers of China and the USA. Even if it does not expand to this extent, it is still quite possible that the war between India and Pakistan

becomes a war between India and China, one that will be incredibly destructive for the people of Asia as a whole, particularly so for South Asia.

The threat of nuclear war and world war is very real, the dynamics of superpowers contending through proxies or allies in South Asia had happened once before in 1971, it can happen again. Only this time, both India and Pakistan have nuclear weapons, and massive conventional armies.

The impact of the war on the working masses on both sides : (Greater surveillance, clampdown on democratic rights, greater oppression on Kashmiris, Balochis, Tribes of Central India, minorities.)

The air strikes and artillery shelling across the border caused the deaths of about seventy civilians on either side. Within both India and Pakistan, panic over the sudden threat of war caused speculators to start hoarding essentials. The impact over Pakistan was greater as a result of shutting out Pakistani airspace. The indirect impact of India shutting the normal flow of water to the Indus valley basin is yet to be seen, but the disruption caused by war was only a mild preview of what impact a full blown war would have.

In the immediate aftermath of the April 26th attack, a massive crackdown in Kashmir resulted in over 1500 people arrested, dozens of homes blown up by the army, and sporadic attacks on Kashmiri Muslims within India. In Pakistan, the military took this emergency to implement the Pakistan Army Act which allowed military tribunals to try civilians. Both countries imposed a sweeping censorship over social media.

Away from the eyes of the media and the public, India stepped up it's operations against Naxalites in Central India which resulted in massacres of Naxalite cadres and the killing of the general secretary of the CPI(Maoist). At the same time, Pakistan stepped up it's repression of Balochis who had been intensifying their agitation for Baloch independence.

The picture that appears makes it clear, that the threat of war will be used by the reactionary capitalist regimes on both sides to justifying increasing repression. The Hindutva forces mobilized in support of the BJP and the impending war with Pakistan. Though we did not reach an all-out war, it is clear that had the war actually gone through, it would be used to justify the worst repressive measures in both countries.

Anti-war sentiments in India did not materialize into a large scale mobilization against the BJP's reactionary war propaganda, on the contrary every opposition party, including the Stalinist CPI(M) and their allies, came out in support of the BJP government. There was no question of security failures, there was no question on the obvious human rights violations that happened in the course of the crackdown. There was no question of the dozens of civilian deaths that India inflicted, and inflicted by Pakistan in retaliation.

Equally clear is the class division of the deaths, the deaths of upper middle class tourists in the Pahalgam attack made headlines, but the deaths of dozens of

peasants and workers who lived along the Indo-Pakistan border were practically erased from the media narrative. Workers and peasant's deaths were treated like collateral damage.

The escalation and sudden ceasefire resulted in a political victory for the Pakistan army, even if it required an emergency loan of nearly \$3 billion dollars, deepening imperialist exploitation of the country. The army continues to pose as the saviour of Pakistan, even as it sold their country, and the future of Pakistan's workers and peasants, to fight their war.

India and particularly the BJP came off worse politically, but had little impact economically. The escalation has given an opportunity for the BJP government to step up repression, intensify reactionary propaganda and continue the politics of divide and rule.

Where we stand :

Revolutionary socialists must see this war for what it is, a reactionary war for the control over Kashmir. A war which has nothing but benefits for the ruling class, and nothing but misery and repression for workers and peasants. In this, Indian and Pakistani workers face a similar enemy, the one at home who would take their country to war, and fight their geo-political games over the graves of workers and peasants. Neither in India nor in Pakistan should there be any trust in the armed forces, who are nothing but glorified killers of the capitalist state. They are not there to 'protect us', they are there to protect capital.

Both India and Pakistan fight wars to deepen or expand it's occupation over oppressed people, be it Balochi, Chhattisgarhi Adivasi, or Kashmiris. Relentless propaganda teaches us from our childhood to salute the troops, to worship them as heroes, not realizing that the same guns which point to the 'enemy across the border' will be turned towards us when the ruling class is threatened. It is why, we not only oppose the war between India and Pakistan, we oppose the very basis of it !

WE STAND FOR KASHMIRI SELF-DETERMINATION, UP TO INDEPENDENCE !

WE STAND IN SOLIDARITY WITH THE OPPRESSED PEOPLE OF BALOCHISTAN AND THE ADIVASIS IN CENTRAL INDIA !

WE STAND OPPOSED TO THE ARMED FORCES OF INDIA AND PAKISTAN !

DOWN WITH THE HINDUTVA BJP !

DOWN WITH THE PAKISTAN ARMY !

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The Mass Spring Resistance in Jammu Kashmir



(The following article was written by Mehnatkash Tehreek, Pakistan, after the wave of protests gripped POK in September 2025)

On September 29, 2025, complete blackout and strict security measures were imposed in Pakistan-administered Jammu Kashmir. However, the people refused to accept silence. What began in 2023 as protests against inflation, flour, and electricity prices has transformed by September 2025 into a broad-based people's movement with a 38-point agenda. The Joint People's Action Committee presented demands that were straightforward and organized, opposing powers, privileges, and political exclusion. The government responded with pressure, cuts, and violence by forces. Mobile and internet services were shut down; news was cut off; roads were blocked. Paramilitary forces were sent from Pakistan, resulting in at least nine martyrs and dozens of injuries in clashes. Yet, this oppression could not suppress the movement — it exposed the system's weakness and the state's disregard for fundamental rights.

State Tactics to Break the Mass Movement

As the movement started, instead of directly confronting the people, the state deployed a right-wing party (Muslim Conference). The main reason was that direct confrontation with millions could be dangerous for the state. Therefore, backed by state power and using loyal or proxy groups, clashes were incited, and innocent unarmed civilians were shot. Despite the bloodshed, the state sought to hide its crimes. Right-wing thugs were used to attack the people, and when

protesters responded, they were branded as extremists or enemies of the state, justifying the heavy force used. This environment was carefully observed to gauge the extent of public support and tolerance for repression, essentially measuring the level of resistance. To divide unity, the state tried to portray peaceful protests as extremism to weaken the people's solidarity. Kashmiri workers need to understand that such far-right groups survive on establishment support. Their use helps the state portray itself as a guardian of law and order while depicting the people as agitators and disruptors.

Lenin and Trotsky famously said, "The state uses reactionary and old forces as shields to crush the revolutionary energy or resistance of oppressed people." When the people firmly opposed these tactics, the hired goons and forces were forced to retreat—soldiers and officers even abandoned their weapons and fled. The strength of youth resistance made the state tremble, prompting the Joint Mass Action Committee to be invited for negotiations.

What the People Achieved

On October 4, Pakistan's government signed an agreement with the Joint Mass Action Committee (JAAC), aiming to end the tense situation that had arisen in Pakistan-administered Jammu Kashmir over the past days. After discussions, both parties agreed on an accord to swiftly end the ongoing movement.

Key Provisions of the Agreement:

- FIRs (First Information Reports) will be filed for casualties and clashes.
- FIRs related to incidents on October 1 and 2, 2025, involving deaths or injuries of law enforcement agencies (LEAs) and protesters, will be registered under the Anti-Terrorism Act, with a judicial commission appointed where necessary. Victims of the October 1 and 2 incidents will receive compensation equivalent to that given to LEA personnel. Injured persons will receive 1 million rupees in compensation, and a family member of each martyr will be provided government employment within 20 days.
- FIRs related to incidents in Banjosa (September 21), Muzaffarabad (September 30 and October 1), Poyk (October 1), Dhirkot (October 1), Mirpur (October 2), and Rawalkotli (October 1) will be forwarded to a judicial commission headed by a high court judge.
- Those arrested during October 2-3 in Islamabad and Rawalpindi will be released.

Reforms in Education and Cabinet:

- Two additional education boards will be established for Muzaffarabad and Poonch divisions, and all three boards of Pakistan-administered Jammu Kashmir will be linked to the Federal Board of Intermediate and Secondary Education.
- Admissions in educational institutions will be open merit-based.
- The Pakistan-administered Jammu Kashmir government will release funds for health cards within 15 days.
- MRI and CT scanning machines will be provided in each district with federal funding.

- The Pakistan-administered Jammu Kashmir cabinet will be limited to 20 ministers/consultants, and the number of administrative secretaries will not exceed 20.
- Civil Defense will be merged into the State Disaster Management Authority (SDMA).
- The Anti-Corruption Bureau and Anti-Corruption Establishment will be merged into one body, governed by the NAB Ordinance.

10 Billion Rupees for Power and Infrastructure:

- The federal government will provide 10 billion rupees for improving the power system in Azad Kashmir.
- Feasibility studies will be conducted for the construction of tunnels at Kori/Kamser (3.7 km) and Chiplani (0.6 km) on the Neelum Valley Road, prioritized under the Saudi Development Fund.
- Under the Mangla Dam Raising Project, land occupancy of the families in Mirpur will be regularized within 30 days.
- Hydro projects will be implemented as per the 2019 High Court decision.
- Feasibility studies for water supply schemes in ten districts will be conducted in the current fiscal year.
- The transport policy will be reviewed, especially regarding the use of 1300cc vehicles.

Review of Refugee Seats:

An high-level committee will be formed to review the issue of seats for those coming from outside the Pakistan-administered Jammu Kashmir constituencies (i.e., the 12 refugee seats). This committee will include representatives from the federal government, Pakistan-administered Jammu Kashmir government, and two legal experts from JAAC. "Until the committee submits its final report, all funds, privileges, and ministries related to these seats will be suspended."

Amendments to the Local Government Law:

- The current local government law will be harmonized with the original 1990 law and the Supreme Court's decisions within 90 days.

Health, Water, and Development Projects:

- Funds will be allocated from ADP for operating theaters and nurseries in Tehsil headquarters hospitals.
- Funds will be provided for the construction of bridges at Gulpur and Rehman (Kotli).
- Water supply schemes and transmission lines in Daddapani (Dadyal) will be funded through ADP.
- Property rights will be granted to refugees in Mandar Colony (Dadyal).
- Property transfer tax will be brought to the level of Punjab or Khyber Pakhtunkhwa within three months.
- Advance tax will be reduced similar to Gilgit-Baltistan and former FATA regions.
- The project timeline for Mirpur International Airport will be set within the current fiscal year.

Monitoring and Implementation Committee

A Monitoring and Implementation Committee will be established to oversee the implementation of the agreement, comprising representatives from the federal government, the Pakistan-administered Jammu Kashmir government, and JAAC.

Key members of the committee include:

- Federal Ministers Tariq Fawad Chaudhry and Aamer Maqam
- Two representatives from the Pakistan-administered Jammu Kashmir government
- Three representatives from JAAC

The committee will set timelines for resolving disputes, forming procedures, and executing every decision.

"It will also review existing privileges and facilities provided to the judiciary, government officials, and ministers, bringing them to a reasonable level."

Constitutional Crisis in Pakistan-Administered Jammu Kashmir

Historical Background

After the partition of 1947, Pakistan-administered Jammu Kashmir, commonly called Azad Jammu and Kashmir, was established. However, rather than being an independent or truly democratic state, this region has always remained under direct Pakistani influence. The provisional constitution of 1974, which functions as an act, forms the basic legal framework of this state, but it has continually suppressed the genuine autonomy and self-determination rights of the Kashmiri people.

Under this act, the Kashmir Council, dominated by Pakistani authorities and the Prime Minister of Pakistan, holds decisive authority over finances, administration, defense, foreign affairs, and communications. The so-called Azad Assembly is limited and cannot pass laws on these matters. Any political force or party that does not accept the idea of accession with Pakistan is barred from participating in elections.

Current Crisis

On September 29, on the call of JAAC, millions of people demonstrated unity around the 12 reserved seats in the Pakistan Legislative Assembly for Jammu and Kashmir refugees, along with 37 other fundamental rights issues. These 12 seats are allocated for refugees residing in Pakistan, and they have been a major political debate for years.

Public circles and various movements have repeatedly questioned the role and legitimacy of these seats. Since most representatives elected from these seats are candidates from major Pakistani political parties with little direct connection to local issues in Jammu and Kashmir, they are often used by these parties to increase their majority in the assembly. These seats frequently raise questions about the people's right to self-determination and local autonomy. Representatives elected with just a few hundred votes spend large budgets on luxuries for themselves and their patrons, considering themselves entitled to 25% of the state's administrative quota. This is altering the state's subject role in Jammu Kashmir, and even before independence, the demographic balance has been disturbed.

Criticism of Leadership

While we stand in defense of the Jammu and Kashmir JAAC, we also occasionally criticize its central leadership. We believe that honest critique is the best approach, which tests every perspective and strategy and adopts positions according to capacity, based on principled understanding.

The JAAC was founded in 2023 by active workers from committees fighting for fundamental and democratic rights across districts and tehsils for years. They felt an urgent need for a central coalition to coordinate their struggles over common issues. Without a formal conference, workers from each district sent three to four representatives to form an organizing committee to synchronize local sub-committees with the central JAAC. It was agreed that representatives from every layer would be included to build a strong committee.

However, the leadership, mostly influenced by traders and second-tier nationalist parties with a centralist approach, has maintained a lack of certainty and seeks to keep the structure of JAAC intact without rank or file participation. Before this movement, for about a year and a half, conferences were held across Jammu and Kashmir under the banner of "Right to Governance and Ownership," without resolutions, glorifying past successes but lacking a clear strategy for new struggles.

During these conferences, when progressive activists proposed ideas such as establishing people's assemblies in villages and towns based on the Kashmiri question, constitutional crisis, and issues, with provisions for recalling leaders and equal pay for workers, the leadership spread propaganda that sub-committees aimed to split the movement. Consequently, on September 29, 2025, a complete lockdown was announced without organized public mobilization.

Meanwhile, when the state began inciting attacks on the public in Muzaffarabad and other places through the right-wing Muslim Conference, the movement called for a peaceful long march toward Muzaffarabad. The state used its proxies and machinery in districts like Mirpur and Bagh, leading to the martyrdom of young protesters, who fought back, after which the attackers abandoned their weapons and fled or were arrested.

Realizing the gravity of the situation, the state quickly invited the JAAC leadership for negotiations. The leadership insisted on direct talks with the Pakistani government because the assembly representatives, due to protests, had lost their governing legitimacy, and negotiations took place on the demands mentioned earlier. It appears that the agreement reached will require the people to take to the streets again to ensure its implementation.

Post-Movement Developments

During the movement, during the signing of the agreement between JAAC and the Pakistani government, two members of the Jammu Kashmir Legislative Assembly and three members of JAAC participated symbolically.

Following this, all central, district, and tehsil-level political and administrative decisions should have involved JAAC members as stakeholders, but this did not

happen—responsibility lies with the central leadership of the committee. The state is systematically tightening its grip around activists who played active roles in the movement. Many young people, arrested on the pretext of possessing weapons seized from forces, are mostly those who fought to protect others from violence and pushed back against the forces.

The state is detaining these youth to weaken the movement and to target the leadership of sub-committees trying to move the movement forward. Therefore, it is essential for JAAC to call defense conferences at the district and tehsil levels, giving each local committee the right to confront state repression with popular resistance, with other committees standing in support.

Revolutionary / Constituent Assembly Campaign

We have repeatedly emphasized that the struggles of the working class involve constitutional issues. For socialist perspectives, the struggle is only possible if we adopt a revolutionary stance on the democratic question—namely, to defend all democratic demands and fight for their revolutionary implementation, including the constitutional question.

The slogan of a Constituent Assembly has historically played a central role in revolutionary democratic struggles, even during bourgeois revolutions like the French Revolution of 1789, the European Revolutions of 1848, and the Russian Revolutions of 1905 and 1917. Marx, Engels, and Lenin's writings bear witness to this. Many revolutions afterward also saw this role.

In essence, a Constituent Assembly is an institution elected solely to draft and decide on the constitution of the state. It is a place where representatives of conflicting classes present their programs on how society should be governed. Therefore, a Constituent Assembly is the most "radical" form of bourgeois democracy because it involves the working classes in debates on the political and economic structure of society.

Marxists do not believe that a socialist system can be peacefully established through such assemblies alone. The abolition of the capitalist government and the expropriation of its property are questions that will ultimately be settled through armed conflict between ruling and oppressed classes.

However, this does not mean Marxists should ignore such institutions. We support utilizing every possible institution to present a complete revolutionary program for social change. Such struggles can help show the masses that these institutions cannot solve society's fundamental problems.

To make a Constituent Assembly more democratic and revolutionary, Marxists propose that representatives be elected based on local people's assemblies, be recallable at any time by their voters, and receive only wages equivalent to skilled workers.

Recent global events and historical experiences demonstrate that revolutionary slogans, especially the call for a Constituent Assembly, can be presented in two ways: revolutionary and reformist. Reformist democratic demands appeal to bourgeois states and emphasize parliamentary routes, avoiding mobilizing the working class and masses. Usually, reformist and centrist calls for a Constituent

Assembly are promoted by ruling classes who summon such assemblies, leading them to serve as tools of bourgeois rule.

In contrast, revolutionary calls demand a Constituent Assembly under the control of the revolutionary masses—organized in action committees and armed militias. Such an assembly would be a product of revolutionary uplift, where the working class holds power or at least a dual power situation exists.

When do Marxists raise the slogan of a revolutionary Constituent Assembly?

We believe that this is not an universal slogan applicable in every country or situation. Our position on this slogan is:

"In circumstances where fundamental issues of political sovereignty are on the agenda, and the masses are not yet conscious that workers' democratic councils are superior to a Constituent Assembly, a revolutionary slogan for a Constituent Assembly can be relevant. Bolshevik-Communists support representatives being under the control of the people and constantly recallable. Such an assembly should not be a tool of the ruling class but should be convened through a revolutionary government of workers' and common people's committees."

Therefore, we propose raising this slogan where struggles or capitalist political systems bring fundamental democratic questions to the forefront. This could be in countries with military juntas or semi-bourgeois governments like Bonapartism, or where the working class's struggle exposes constitutional issues.

Until workers and popular classes understand the illusions of bourgeois democracy, Marxists should promote the slogan of a revolutionary Constituent Assembly in these circumstances.

The revolutionary/people's rights movement's courage has not only inspired Kashmiri people but also fostered a sense of unity among Pakistan's people, fighting against oppression and democratic questions. They are determined that if the masses unite in their struggle for rights, rulers will not have enough power to usurp people's rights.

Our social media friends and acquaintances, disregarding anti-Pakistan propaganda, are repeatedly congratulating on victories and pledging to further organize the movement within Pakistan for their rights. To preserve the gains of the movement, it is crucial to continue applying pressure from villages and towns.

During the movement, experiences should be shared, and demands for women and men, rural and urban issues, along with district-level markets and complete general hospitals, should be raised through community committees.

This process is only possible when public committees are consciously involved in every stage. Under democratic centralism, every campaign should be decided by voting, and efforts should be made to reach consensus or, failing that, prioritize the majority decision—regardless of whether organizers belong to the minority—this is the best way to foster equality, humility, and unity among the people.

All this should be implemented through People's Assemblies starting from villages and towns, with efforts to organize workers' committees within their institutions. Every People's Assembly should campaign strongly against the partial constitutional law of Pakistan-Administered Jammu and Kashmir, especially the restrictions on participating in elections, and propagate the importance of an alternative revolutionary Constituent Assembly.

This is the way to keep the movement's momentum alive and respond to the rulers' tactics of confusion and repression!

Therefore, the struggle should proceed without trusting these rulers, who are constantly moving forward. Now, these neo-colonial rulers daily tell the people that Pakistan commits injustices and fails to fulfill promises—when the predator gets caught in the trap, it begins to complain about the trap itself.

It is necessary to seize the opportunity of their inconsistency. The people should not rely on their authority but must involve all state stakeholders—including representatives of the common peoples, workers' leadership, the middle class (lawyers, professors, doctors, traders, transporters), students, and women—in the campaign for a revolutionary Constituent Assembly that will undertake constitution-making and lead a revolutionary assembly for Kashmir's independence.

This Kashmir movement is not merely regional unrest but part of a global struggle against repression, resource plunder of oppressed nations, neoliberal policies, the privileges of the political elite, and unemployment. When basic needs are withheld and privileges reserved for a few, resistance is inevitable. Repression through blackout and bullets makes it impossible to suppress this reaction, as seen in Pakistan-Administered Kashmir.

The constitutional crisis in Pakistan-Administered Kashmir is not just a legal issue but a question of power. The Karachi Agreement, the 1974 Act, and the structures around them are tools of dominance rejected by the people. The people are no longer willing to be passive spectators; a revolutionary solution will not be fulfilled through constitutional reforms or demands alone. Instead, the active struggle of Kashmiri workers will build a democratic and socialist Kashmir through the experience of a revolutionary Constituent Assembly.

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After the Arrest: How 5 July 2026 Changed the Political Balance in Kashmir



Mass Resistance, State Repression and the Internationalisation of a Democratic Movement in Pakistan-Administered Jammu and Kashmir

When the Pakistani authorities arrested Joint Awami Action Committee (JAAC) core member Shaukat Nawaz Mir, they expected to break the momentum of a movement that had already endured weeks of repression, arrests and political intimidation. The calculation was familiar: remove the leadership, criminalise the organisation, isolate the movement through an information blackout and gradually exhaust the population through fear and economic hardship. Similar methods have been employed against democratic movements across Pakistan for decades. Yet in Pakistan-administered Jammu Kashmir, the strategy produced an outcome very different from that intended by the state.

Rather than retreating, the movement entered a new political phase.

Within days of Mir's arrest, the Joint Awami Action Committee issued a call for mass marches, demonstrations and shutter-down strikes on 5 July 2026 throughout Pakistan-administered Jammu Kashmir. At the same time, it appealed to the Kashmiri diaspora to organise solidarity protests, public meetings and awareness campaigns wherever Kashmiri communities were living. What began as a regional movement now consciously sought to become an international democratic campaign.

The significance of this appeal extended beyond symbolic solidarity. It recognised a political reality that has become increasingly important over recent decades: Kashmir is no longer politically confined within its geographical boundaries. Hundreds of thousands of Kashmiris live and work in Britain, Europe, North America and the Middle East. Their economic contribution through remittances, their political influence within diaspora communities and their growing engagement with trade unions, human rights organisations and democratic movements make them an indispensable part of Kashmir's political future. JAAC's appeal therefore represented a strategic attempt to break the movement's isolation and expose developments inside Kashmir to an international audience.

Inside Kashmir, however, the immediate challenge was survival.

By early July, many districts had experienced weeks of disruption. Sit-ins continued despite repeated forces operations. Internet restrictions had severely limited communication. Movement between districts became increasingly difficult. Reports from participants described shortages of food, medicines and fuel in several areas, while transport networks operated only intermittently. markets remained closed, businesses were under enormous pressure and ordinary families carried the burden of an indefinite confrontation with the state.

Yet these hardships produced a remarkable political response.

Instead of dispersing, communities organised themselves around the sit-ins. Villages collected food for demonstrators. Families shared available supplies. Volunteers established informal support networks for those travelling to protest sites. The movement increasingly relied not upon formal institutions but upon collective organisation developed from below. What emerged was not simply a series of demonstrations but the early characteristics of a society learning to organise itself under conditions of sustained political confrontation.

The events of **5 July** demonstrated that the movement had become far broader than many observers had anticipated. Across Rawalakot, Bagh, Muzaffarabad, Mirpur, Kotli, Bhimber, Neelum, Forward kuhota, sudnoti and numerous smaller towns and villages, people responded to JAAC's call despite extensive security deployments. In many places, protesters encountered roadblocks and police barricades erected to prevent marches from reaching district centres. Rather than abandoning the demonstrations, participants found alternative routes, removed obstacles or reorganised their marches. The ability of the movement to adapt

under pressure reflected a growing confidence among ordinary people who increasingly viewed themselves not as spectators but as active participants in shaping the political future of their society.

One of the most striking features of the July mobilisation was its social composition.

The movement was no longer dominated by experienced political activists. Workers marched alongside traders, students alongside lawyers, pensioners alongside young first-time protesters. Entire families participated. In many towns, women formed a visible and determined presence at the front of demonstrations. Their participation challenged deeply rooted assumptions about political activism in a conservative society and transformed both the appearance and the character of the movement.

Women were not simply present; they became organisers, speakers and defenders of the demonstrations. In several localities they confronted police lines directly, refusing to abandon protest sites despite the threat of arrest or the use of force. Their presence gave the movement a broader social legitimacy while simultaneously encouraging many families who might otherwise have remained hesitant to participate openly.

Equally significant was the emergence of a new generation of politically confident young people.

Many had never previously participated in organised political activity. The movement itself became their political education. They organised transport, coordinated local demonstrations, communicated information despite internet restrictions and assumed responsibilities traditionally carried by older activists. Reports from numerous districts described young people rushing towards protest sites whenever news spread of forces operations or clashes. Their determination reflected more than youthful enthusiasm. It expressed a growing conviction that the outcome of the struggle would shape not only present conditions but also the future of their generation.

This new political consciousness was increasingly reflected in the slogans heard throughout the demonstrations. One chant echoed repeatedly across towns and villages: "**Khoon Rang Layega, Inqilab Aayega.**" "**The blood of the martyrs will bear fruit; revolution will come.**" Another slogan, equally common, captured the determination of the demonstrators: "**Halla Bol! Halla Bol!**" "**Advance the struggle! Press forward!**"

Whether interpreted literally or symbolically, these slogans revealed an important political shift. For many participants, the movement was no longer understood simply as a campaign around immediate demands. It increasingly represented a broader struggle over democratic rights, political power and the relationship between the people and the state. This evolution also created new challenges.

As often occurs during rapidly expanding social movements, the energy of the rank and file occasionally moved faster than sections of the leadership. Younger

participants frequently expressed impatience with prolonged negotiations that produced no visible results, while many argued that the movement should maintain continuous public mobilisation until concrete demands were implemented. These debates did not necessarily indicate weakness. On the contrary, they reflected the growing political maturity of a movement whose participants increasingly regarded themselves as active decision-makers rather than passive supporters.

The state, however, interpreted the expanding movement very differently.

Having already declared JAAC a banned organisation, the authorities intensified their efforts to portray the movement as a threat to public order and national security. State officials and sections of the national media repeatedly characterised JAAC leaders as agents of foreign interests, separatists or individuals seeking to destabilise Pakistan. The movement's democratic confronted by large-scale democratic mobilisation have often sought to shift public demands were frequently overshadowed by narratives emphasising security concerns and allegations of external influence.

Such narratives are neither unique nor historically unusual. Governments discussion away from social grievances and towards questions of national security, patriotism and external conspiracy. By framing political dissent as disloyalty, the authorities attempt to isolate movements from wider public sympathy and justify extraordinary measures of repression.

Yet the events of July suggested that these strategies were becoming less effective than in previous periods.

Despite weeks of official propaganda, arrests and restrictions, significant sections of the population continued participating in demonstrations. Even where uncertainty remained, particularly outside Kashmir, the state's narrative no longer enjoyed unquestioned authority. The persistence of the protests indicated that lived experience had become more influential than official rhetoric. For thousands of ordinary Kashmiris, the movement's legitimacy derived not from political speeches but from their own participation in collective action.

The arrest of Shaukat Nawaz Mir therefore produced the opposite of its intended effect. Rather than creating paralysis, it accelerated the transformation of a protest movement into a broader popular mobilisation. July 5 did not resolve the political crisis, but it fundamentally altered its character. The state could still deploy force, make arrests and impose restrictions. What it could no longer assume was that repression alone would restore political normality.

Instead, a new and more difficult question emerged for both the movement and the authorities: **what happens when a society refuses to retreat?**

The significance of 5 July did not lie merely in the number of demonstrations or the geographical spread of the protests. Its real importance lay in exposing the limits of state repression. During the preceding month, the authorities had employed almost every instrument available to contain the movement. JAAC had

been outlawed, its leaders arrested, hundreds of activists detained, internet access severely restricted, roads placed under heavy security and a sustained media campaign launched to discredit the movement. Yet none of these measures succeeded in restoring political normality. Instead, every new attempt to suppress the movement appeared to deepen public anger and widen participation.

The demonstrations of 5 July therefore represented more than another day of protest. They demonstrated that the political initiative was no longer entirely in the hands of the state.

Perhaps the most remarkable aspect of the movement was the emergence of women as one of its most dynamic social forces. While women had participated in earlier phases of the struggle, July witnessed an unprecedented level of involvement. They did not merely attend rallies; they organised demonstrations, addressed gatherings, maintained sit-in camps and, in several localities, stood in the front ranks when police attempted to disperse crowds.

In whole Pakistan Administered Kashmir women marched alongside men in numbers that surprised even experienced political observers. In some confrontations, women reportedly resisted police attempts to block demonstrations, throwing stones in self-defence when security forces advanced. Such scenes reflected not simply courage but a profound social transformation. A movement capable of drawing women into the centre of political life acquires a legitimacy and resilience that repression alone cannot easily destroy.

The participation of women also changed the atmosphere of the movement itself. Families increasingly attended demonstrations together. Sit-ins became community spaces rather than exclusively political gatherings. Mothers, daughters and elderly women shared platforms with students, workers and traders. The struggle increasingly appeared not as the project of one political organisation but as the collective expression of society itself. Equally decisive was the role of young people.

Every mass movement eventually reaches a point where a new generation assumes responsibilities beyond its years. Kashmir appears to have reached precisely such a moment. Many of the young people leading chants, organising transport, coordinating communications and defending protest sites had little previous political experience. They learned organisation through struggle itself.

Whenever reports emerged of police advancing towards a sit-in or attempting arrests, young people travelled rapidly towards those areas. They understood the defence of one protest site as the defence of the movement as a whole. Their confidence frequently exceeded that of older activists, many of whom carried memories of previous defeats and repression. The younger generation, by

contrast, increasingly viewed retreat as impossible. For them, the movement had become inseparable from their own future.

Regardless of the precise wording used from town to town, the political message remained consistent. The movement increasingly understood itself as a struggle for democratic dignity, public accountability and popular sovereignty rather than merely a campaign around individual grievances.

The authorities responded by intensifying both repression and propaganda.

State institutions continued portraying JAAC as a threat to national security. Sections of the media described the movement as externally sponsored, while prominent leaders were denounced as "Indian agents," "separatists" or individuals attempting to undermine Pakistan's position on Kashmir. Official statements repeatedly emphasised Pakistan's historical sacrifices for Kashmir and suggested that criticism of state policy amounted to disloyalty.

Such accusations have become familiar throughout South Asia. Democratic movements demanding accountability are frequently recast as security threats, allowing governments to justify exceptional measures while avoiding the substantive issues raised by protesters. Yet this strategy depends upon persuading society that dissent originates outside rather than within it. The events of July suggested that such arguments convinced fewer people than before.

Despite an almost complete communications blackout, information continued to circulate. Young people climbed surrounding hills in search of mobile signals, crossed into areas where internet access remained available or relied upon relatives outside Kashmir to transmit videos, photographs and eyewitness accounts. International media organisations and members of the Kashmiri diaspora helped relay developments to audiences abroad, partially breaking the isolation imposed by the blackout.

This informal communication network became one of the movement's greatest strengths. Modern technology can be restricted, but collective determination often finds alternative routes. Every image reaching London, Birmingham, Manchester, Oslo, Milan, Toronto or New York weakened the effectiveness of the state's information strategy. Meanwhile, new forms of local organisation emerged inside Kashmir itself.

In several areas, residents established community checkpoints designed to monitor the movement of security forces and to alert neighbouring villages when forces' operations appeared imminent. Volunteers organised food distribution, medical assistance and transport for demonstrators. In many districts, ordinary citizens—not professional politicians—became the practical organisers of resistance.

The state reportedly attempted to encourage divisions within society by mobilising local political elites, pro-government networks and influential individuals against the movement. Yet these efforts achieved only limited success. The deeper the confrontation became, the more ordinary people appeared to rely upon their own collective experience rather than official assurances.

Another important political development concerned the scheduled **27 July Legislative Assembly elections**.

In numerous towns, protesters publicly declared that they would reject election campaigns until the movement's demands received a meaningful response. Some communities announced that candidates would not be welcomed into their areas while repression continued. Whether these declarations could ultimately be sustained remained uncertain, but they reflected a growing crisis of political legitimacy. Increasingly, sections of the population questioned not merely individual policies but the credibility of existing political institutions themselves.

For decades, mainstream political parties have promised reform while operating within structures over which they exercise only limited influence. The July movement exposed the widening gap between these traditional parties and an increasingly mobilised society. As the protests expanded, many established political leaders struggled to keep pace with public expectations. Some called for dialogue without presenting concrete proposals. Others criticised repression while simultaneously urging demonstrators to return home. Such positions satisfied neither the authorities nor the protesters. This tension was also visible within the movement itself.

Large popular mobilisations inevitably generate strategic debates. Should demonstrations continue indefinitely? Under what conditions should negotiations begin? Can democratic gains be secured without broader political organisation? What relationship should exist between spontaneous mobilisation and structured leadership?

These questions became increasingly important as the confrontation continued. The determination of the youth inspired the movement, but it also raised practical challenges. Sustaining prolonged sit-ins required food, medicine, financial resources and organisational coordination. A movement capable of mobilising enormous energy must eventually confront the equally important question of how that energy can be sustained over time.

From the perspective of the authorities, the political dilemma became equally complex.

Two broad options remained available. The first was meaningful negotiation based upon substantive concessions capable of restoring public confidence. The second was a further escalation of repression in the hope of exhausting the movement through force. Both strategies carried significant risks. Concessions might encourage wider democratic demands throughout the region, while intensified repression risked producing greater instability and potentially transforming isolated confrontations into a deeper political crisis.

It was precisely this contradiction that made the events of July historically significant. The state retained overwhelming institutional power, yet its political authority appeared increasingly contested. The movement possessed enormous moral energy and expanding public support, yet it still faced difficult questions concerning organisation, leadership and long-term strategy. One reality, however, had become unmistakably clear.

The Kashmir movement was no longer a local dispute that could be quietly contained behind checkpoints, internet blackouts or official press statements. It had become part of a much broader struggle over democracy, social justice and political legitimacy—one that was increasingly attracting attention far beyond the mountains of Kashmir.

If 5 July transformed the political balance inside Pakistan-administered Jammu and Kashmir, it also marked the beginning of a new international phase of the struggle. Recognising that the state's information blackout was intended not only to isolate the movement internally but also to conceal it from the outside world, the Joint Awami Action Committee appealed to Kashmiris living abroad to organise demonstrations, public meetings and solidarity campaigns wherever they resided. The response was immediate.

Across Britain, Europe and North America, members of the Kashmiri diaspora organised marches, rallies and demonstrations. London became the centre of this international campaign. Thousands marched through the capital to the Pakistan High Commission, demanding an end to the repression, the restoration of democratic freedoms and meaningful dialogue with the movement. Similar demonstrations, though smaller in scale, took place in other British cities as well as in several European countries and North America. Women again played a particularly visible role, reflecting the changing social character of the movement itself.

For decades, the Kashmiri diaspora has maintained emotional, cultural and economic ties with its homeland. During the July crisis these ties acquired a new political significance. Diaspora communities did more than protest; they became a vital channel through which information left Kashmir despite severe restrictions on communication. Videos, eyewitness accounts and photographs that could not circulate freely within the region reached the outside world through family networks, activists and independent journalists. International media coverage,

although limited, increasingly challenged the effectiveness of the state's attempt to monopolise the narrative.

The economic dimension should not be underestimated either. Hundreds of thousands of Kashmiris living abroad send substantial remittances to their families. During the crisis, many openly discussed reducing or delaying transfers as a form of protest, while others redirected financial support towards families affected by the movement. Whether these initiatives were symbolic or economically significant, they demonstrated that developments inside Kashmir were capable of generating pressure beyond its geographical boundaries.

This internationalisation also altered the political calculations of the Pakistani state. The authorities were no longer dealing solely with demonstrations inside Kashmir but with a movement capable of attracting attention from trade unions, human rights organisations, progressive political parties and sections of the international media. A crisis that had initially appeared local was beginning to acquire an international audience. Yet the significance of the July movement extends beyond Kashmir itself.

It unfolded at a moment when multiple social and democratic struggles were already developing across Pakistan. In **Balochistan**, the movement led by the **Baloch Yakjehti Committee** continued to challenge enforced disappearances, political repression and restrictions on democratic rights. The imprisonment of prominent activists, including leaders associated with the movement, became a focal point for wider protests. In **Khyber Pakhtunkhwa**, PTM (**pushtoon Tahfiz Movement**) continued to raise concerns about militarisation, insecurity, displacement and the protection of civil liberties. Across the country, journalists, lawyers, students, trade unionists and human rights defenders faced increasing legal and political pressure. Government employees mobilised against deteriorating working conditions, while workers opposed privatisation, downsizing and attacks on labour rights.

These developments should not be viewed as isolated events. They reflect different expressions of a broader political and social crisis.

Over recent decades, successive governments—civilian and military alike—have pursued economic policies centred on privatisation, fiscal austerity and market liberalisation. Public services have been weakened, labour protections reduced and strategic sectors opened to private and corporate interests. At the same time, democratic space has narrowed. Restrictions on freedom of expression, assembly and association have increasingly accompanied neoliberal restructuring. This combination of economic inequality and political centralisation has produced growing discontent across multiple regions and social classes.

From a Marxist perspective, the Kashmir movement cannot therefore be understood simply as a regional dispute. It is one expression of a wider

contradiction between a political and economic order that struggles to secure popular legitimacy and a society increasingly unwilling to accept the costs imposed upon it.

This does not automatically mean that whole region specially Pakistan has entered a revolutionary situation. Such conclusions require careful analysis rather than political enthusiasm. Classical Marxist theory distinguishes between periods of social discontent, pre-revolutionary crises and fully revolutionary situations. A revolutionary situation generally involves a profound crisis of state authority, the inability of the existing ruling class to govern in its traditional manner and the emergence of working class Consciousness of exercising an alternative form of popular power.

Pakistan has not yet reached that stage.

However, developments during 2026 suggest that elements commonly associated with a **pre-revolutionary situation** are becoming increasingly visible. Confidence in established political institutions has weakened. Social struggles are expanding across different regions and sectors. Traditional parties face growing difficulties in containing public anger. Economic hardship continues to deepen. Repressive measures increasingly replace political consensus as the principal means of governance. These are significant developments, but they remain tendencies rather than completed historical outcomes.

The future trajectory will depend not only upon the actions of the state but also upon the political capacity of democratic movements themselves.

The events of July revealed both the enormous strengths and the real limitations of the Kashmir movement. Its greatest strength lies in its remarkable popular legitimacy. It has general workers, students, traders, women, professionals and rural communities around a broadly democratic programme. It has demonstrated extraordinary courage under conditions of sustained repression. It has shown an impressive capacity for self-organisation and mutual support.

Yet every mass movement eventually confronts questions that cannot be answered by courage alone.

How should spontaneous mobilisation be transformed into durable democratic organisation? How can unity be preserved while encouraging open political debate? Under what conditions should negotiations occur, and what guarantees are necessary to ensure that agreements are implemented? How can local struggles connect with broader democratic and labour movements without losing their own political independence?

These are strategic questions rather than tactical ones, and they will shape the future of the movement long after the immediate confrontation has passed.

One important development during the July mobilisation deserves particular attention. Increasingly, activists from different nationalities, regions and political

traditions recognised that isolated struggles are easier to suppress than coordinated ones. This understanding has encouraged discussion around initiatives such as the **People's Solidarity Caravan**—a platform intended to strengthen solidarity between movements resisting repression, economic exploitation and democratic restrictions across the region.

The significance of such initiatives lies not in organisational labels but in political principle. When workers in Punjab support democratic rights in Kashmir, when students in Sindh defend political prisoners in Balochistan, when lawyers in Islamabad speak against attacks on journalists, and when Kashmiris stand with movements elsewhere, the state can no longer isolate each struggle within its own geographical boundaries. Solidarity becomes not simply a moral gesture but a practical form of political resistance.

Ultimately, the central lesson of 5 July is not that repression has ended or that victory is inevitable. Neither conclusion would be justified. The state retains formidable institutional resources and may continue to rely upon coercion. The movement itself faces difficult organisational and political challenges.

But one fact can no longer be ignored. The attempt to silence Kashmir through arrests, bans, blackouts and intimidation has not restored political stability. Instead, it has produced a generation more politically conscious, more organised and more determined than before. A movement once portrayed as local has become part of a wider debate about democracy, social justice and popular sovereignty throughout the region.

Whether the authorities choose negotiation or further repression will shape the next phase of this conflict. Whether the movement can transform its remarkable courage into lasting democratic organisation will shape its historical legacy.

What happened on **5 July 2026** was therefore more than a day of protest. It marked the moment when thousands of ordinary people demonstrated that political legitimacy does not arise from decrees, prohibitions or coercion, but from the active participation of society itself. The events of that day did not resolve Kashmir's political crisis, but they ensured that it could no longer be dismissed as a temporary disturbance. They revealed a society determined to defend its democratic rights and a movement whose significance now extends far beyond the mountains where it began.

History rarely moves in straight lines. Victories are followed by setbacks, advances by retreats. Yet there are moments that permanently alter the political imagination of a people. **For many Kashmiris, 5 July 2026 appears destined to become one of those moments.**

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