



Kashmir: A Case of Freedom

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At home, the Kashmiri people's ongoing quest for justice and self-determination is as much ignored by their venal politicians as it is rejected by Pakistan. Internationally, their struggle is forgotten, as the West refuses to bring pressure to bear on its regional ally India. Kashmir: The Case for Freedom is an impassioned attempt to redress this imbalance and to fill the gap in our moral imagination. Covering Kashmir's past and present and the occupation's causes and consequences, the authors issue a clarion call for the withdrawal of Indian troops and for Kashmir's right to self-determination.

Kashmir: A Case of Freedom Details

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Amal Kant says

While the veracity of well-documented events can't be doubted - the depiction of opinions and wild claims as historical facts is troubling. Indulging in rhetoric, underpinned by human emotions and sufferings, while sparing no thoughts for the outcome of suggested actions made the reading of these essays an onerous task for me.

Karthik Ramakrishnan says

A hard-hitting book; made me think and search a lot.

'The Story of Kashmir', by Tariq Ali succeeds the Introduction by Pankaj Mishra (which is to the point and sets off the relay.) Ali paints a bleak picture, with a non-linear narrative that held my attention with a cold stranglehold.

Arundhati Roy's 'Azadi: The Only Thing Kashmiris Want' was short and quite scathing. Typically unblinking, I felt it held its own after Ali's lengthy monologue and paved the way strongly for more.

The 'Poems by a Queen of Kashmir' were spare and had a strained, powerful effect.

'Fayazabad 31223', by Hilal Bhatt was a captivating narrative, fiery and scary. I thought it underlined the book's message with a subtle and yet definitive tone.

Angana P. Chatterji's 'The Militarized Zone' was a long, informative piece, full of intricate details of prose and numbers, which were both mind-boggling and spine-tingling. These lines effectively encapsulate Kashmir's plight under India's clutches- "In the administration of brutality, India, the former colony, has proven itself equal to its former colonial masters. Governing Kashmir is about India's coming of age as a power. Kashmir is the result of a fixation with haphazard and colonially imposed borders. India overwrites memory – histories of violence, conflict, partition, and events that remain unresolved – to maintain the myth of its triumphant unification as a nation-state with Kashmir at its headspring. India's control of Kashmir requires that Kashmiri demands for justice be depicted as a threat to India's integrity."

Roy wraps up the relay-narrative in 'Seditious Nehru', a short and suggestive compilation, that pointed almost silently at India's willingness in Kashmir not having freedom.

Ali returns with a searing message- 'Not crushed, merely ignored', which said a lot.

In most of these pieces, there is anger and shock pouring through the words, but in most places, in an incognito fashion, which augmented the gravity of Kashmir's present state.

This book is another attempt to bat for Kashmir's case. This book, this compilation, has told me a great many things, many of which escape my comprehension, many of which escape my belief. I can only read more material to know more.

Nikita Jayswal says

Eye opener is what i would call this book. As an indian i feel i have deceived of the truth about Kashmir. This book is a start to my understanding of the situation better. Its shameful to learn that Kashmir's situation is equivalent to Gaza. i hope there is more truthful journalism in India and freedom of speech.

Naumaan Omair says

An eyeopener for Indians, Pakistanis & the world alike.

Kashmir bears much resemblance with Palestine but is categorically ignored by media & activists alike, worldwide. It suffers in the hands of world's largest military occupation commissioned by world's largest democracy yet world turns a blind eye to its plight. Spiritually like Eden, physically nothing less than heaven and politically a living hell, that's what my Kashmir is and all the stakeholders mainly Pakistan & India have contributed to its current situation.

Rama says

A lightning-quick read that serves as a fine introduction to the non-mainstream perspective on Kashmir. Although focused on Kashmir's case for self-determination and freedom, there are references to the Kashmiri Pandit killings and the exodus, so crass nationalists have not much to complain about. Hilal Bhatt's fear of the religious majority as a result of his post-Ayodhya travel travails depicted through a police station visual and his looking out for bearded and turbaned Sikhs in a train to travel with is quite moving. I couldn't relate to Habbah Khatun's translated poetry and couldn't see the point of Arundhati Roy's chapter titled "Seditious Nehru." Nehru's media, forum and public pronouncements are excerpted to convey that Arundhati was arguing for the same things; however, this ignores the fact that Nehru's statements represented "Indian interests," which is why they changed or disappeared underground over time.

Chandan Kumar says

During my childhood i always liked the map of india with a crown at the top in form of jammu and kashmir. Subsequently i grow up and learned that it has been broken in three parts. Nobody bothered to tell me how it has happened like this and why so much militiarization in one state of india. The course of history and event that took place in reaching this crude level is still unknown to many of us as it has never been discussed. The book discusses varius of such issues with essays. One missing part in the book is the perspective of other side and their need. Why the other side of kashmir train the people from this side to be a millitant and what benefit are they getting. The local people's leaders in this part of kashmir there are now taking benefit of situation for their own good rather than thinking about resolving the issues.

Now the people itself dont know where to turn in order to ask for justice. The position of government of my country always avoid to touch the issue of the kashmir. This issue need a permanent solution and closure for once and all as india itself with country of diversity faces more challenges which are growing these days. Development in the nation as whole vision with such issues would be challenging. I would love to know more about the various issues and challenges in implementing an acceptable solution on the issue.

Just few of my collected thoughts after reading this books.

Hari says

Tariq Ali's pieces were very insightful. As was Angana Chatterjee's. I did not have a problem when Arundathi Roy's pieces. But, to me the most moving piece was Hilal Bhatt's. This is good introduction to Kashmir and the logical next step after The Ministry of Utmost Happiness.

ahmad afridi says

i accidentally picked up this book . accidentally in a sense that i was looking for Tariq Ali's Islam quintet and i came across this title . I longed to read about background of kashmir crisis and this time these fresh insurgencies were going on so i decided to give this book a try and found this exactly what i was looking for

basically this book is a collection of essays by a number of writers . in the start a short and brief introduction to the history of kashmir from the time of mughals till 2010 was given by tariq ali, a job done splendidly . anyone to whom political discussion seem vague can skip rest of the book .

arundhati roy raised very good questions about the grounds of kashmir's freedom movement but these questions remained unanswered and will need further reading . in another essay where she quoted nehru's several addresses are useful to understand india's stand on kashmir issue in early years ..

hilal bhatt presented a dreadful picture of atrocities on religious basis in india
Mrs. Chatterji discussed the death game played in kashmir beyond iron curtains.

give it a read . its is a short book but will give you good understandings about the said issue

Mlhoganjr says

Kashmir, the Case for Freedom is a fascinating look at a corner of the world that rarely makes the news. This despite half a million Indian troops, paramilitary forces, and police waging a low-level war on the population there for over a half-century, killing more people than the occupations in Northern Ireland, Palestine, and Tibet combined. On the rare occasions some extraordinary event there merits a paragraph in the back of the New York Times, the conflict is framed as a budding democracy versus Islamic zealots fomenting a guerilla war in some rural hinterland. The fact that the democratic activists in Kashmir have rejected radical Islamic militants for the most part is either ignored or misunderstood by Western media.

Tariq Ali's concise history of the region and its politics which opens this collection is worth the purchase price alone. Arundhati Roy's examination of what Kashmiris really want examines the modern movement for Kashmiri self-determination. Hilal Bhatt offers an absolutely terrifying first-hand account of the religious and ethnic violence that pervade the region and India as a whole, despite the latter's public relations gloss which paint it as a modern, democratic and open country.

Admittedly, I knew little about Kashmir, its occupation, or the movement for freedom by its people before opening this book. Now I'm fascinated by the area and will certainly read more, even if it means rooting out that lonely paragraph in the back of the New York Times.

Swakkhar says

A must read to revise the story and history of Kashmir, neither it is Indian occupied or by Pakistan. Kashmir, unfulfilled dream of its people.

Abhijit Selukar says

3/5

I would have given it a 3.5/5 had it not been for rubbish accounts detailed by Ms. Arundhati Roy. This book is more of a collection of essays written by various journalists, academics and scholars. Tariq Ali's and Hilal Bhatt's accounts and stories come out as the most detailed and genuine. Hilal Bhatt's story on the atrocities committed by Kar Sevak during the Babri Masjid demolition on the unarmed and helpless students is disheartening and cringe-worthy. Sadly Arundhati Roy and Ms. Chatterji come out as ultra-leftist and impractical in their approach. While Ms Chatterji blames the various operations carried out by Indian Military in Kashmir (which MIGHT be true), Ms Roy blames the Hindu Right wing for the failures in Kashmir (without noting the fact that it was Congress who has been in power in the post independent India).
Read it for:: The essay "The story of Kashmir" and "Fayazabad 31223"
Read with a pinch of salt "The Militarized Zone"
Avoid "Azadi" by Arundhati Roy
Things missing in the book :: The atrocities during the Pashtun invasion and late 1980's attacks and genocides on Kashmiri Pandits

Praveena D.M. says

Biased book. Only Tariq Ali part of the book makes sense. All other writers are very biased. Except once, there was no mention of Kashmir Pandiths. No author bothered to explain how and Pandiths driven out of their home land. Let's agree for a moment that Kashmir issue is homegrown and people of Kashmir wants azadi then who drove the Kashmir Pandiths out of valley from their houses, who killed innocent Hindu families and Hindu Women. As per Tariq, 15% of Kashmiries are Hindus, what is the percentage of Hindus left in the Kashmir now. Is it a curse to be Hindu?

Kashmir families who lost their beloved ones should get justice but what about the Kashmiri Pandiths who are living as refugees in their own country from last 26 years.

Nikhil says

2.5/5.

A collection of essays concerning Kashmir in the wake of the 2008-2010 popular uprising against the Indian military occupation.

The book needed more structure and more citations. The two best essays, by Hilal Bhatt and Angana Chatterji, were the highlight of the book precisely because the first was a personal anecdote requiring no citations and the second, written by an academic rather than a journalist, was carefully sourced and made provable claims. The opening essay by Tariq Ali, while an interesting synopsis of the conflict, needed to be better written and needed to have footnotes and citations. He makes many unverifiable claims (e.g. he claims that the Pakistani military dictatorship under Zia ul-Haq, to curry favor with the Saudis, ran a prostitution ring involving educated women recruited from college campuses) that need sources and citations to be believable lest they fall into ad hominem attacks used to vilify any and all opponents of Kashmiri liberation. The portion of his essay on Partition and the roots of the Kashmiri conflict requires prior knowledge of the time period, should be fleshed out further, and would greatly benefit from a detailed academic treatment. Arundhati Roy's essay was mediocre, and the excerpts of poetry by Habbah Khatun and of statements by Nehru were unnecessary.

Overall, this book is best when it focuses on documenting and discussing the atrocities and violations committed by the Indian occupation over the past 25 years and how this feeds into the liberation struggle for Kashmir. There is little in the book discussing how to bring about the only solution the books suggests -- a plebiscite held in Kashmir. Tariq Ali and Arundhati Roy appear to favor appealing to the West to increase Western pressure on the Indian government to fulfill its commitment and hold the plebiscite. This is nonsense and will not work. Given the jingoism and chauvinism pervading the Hindu right and their stranglehold on Indian politics, it is doubtful foreign pressure will shift the Indian polity towards accepting a plebiscite. The book does not seem to be interested in convincing the Indian intellectual class of the value of withdrawing from Kashmir. Perhaps, given the moral bankruptcy of India's intellectuals, this is already a lost cause.

Ayush Boruah says

It doesn't provide a truly comprehensive picture of the entire Kashmir issue but people looking for a brief but definitive idea can find this book useful. Two chapters are of important note, with regard to the aforementioned, here- "The Story of Kashmir" by Tariq Ali and "The Militarized Zone" by Angana P. Chatterji. "Fayazabad 31223" is a true account by Hilal Bhatt which emphasizes how easy it is for human minds to be conquered by hate and senseless violence.

Marcy says

A very interesting introduction to Kashmir. Lots of interesting stories are included here that narrate the violence perpetrated by the Indian army in Kashmir as well as way that media in India ensures that most Indians have no idea about what is really going on or what Kashmiri people want. What is especially interesting is the way so many of the stories about administrative detention and night raids made feel like I was reading a book about Palestine. In fact, two of the most interesting facts I learned in the book are: 1) Much of the weaponry used in Kashmir by the Indian army is purchased from Israel; 2) Israeli army officials have gone to Kashmir to train Indian soldiers. The one thing I wish this book did have was a nice bibliography for further reading in the back.

Elizabeth says

The book provides a sobering and enlightening read concerning rarely-reported events within Kashmir whose wounds, if left untreated, shall most likely fester and cause greater unrest for the area. The book, therefore, seems a dangerous portent that shall hopefully quicken others to action so as to prevent a slide into complete mayhem.

Asma says

A must read to know about Kashmir.....a perfect narrative by all dt authors describing the situation Kashmir

Ola Awadallah says

It is the first book for me that I read it about Kashmir. The heaven that convert to Hell in 1947. As Palestinian girl, I choose Kashmir because its case belong to us, near to us and looks like us. Military checkpoints, prisons, detention centres, missing Kashmiris, conflict and wars.. All what Kashmiris want.. Azadi ????? (freedom)!

Neil says

The essay called 'Fayazabad 31223' and 'The story of Kashmir' are the best parts of the book. Fayazabad 31223 made me cry. The emotion it produce is one of the most horrifying real story I ever heard. The author of the essay done a remarkable job while telling this story. The allegation in the story very serious and heinous, and if no one knows about it except the author and selected person involved in than its a shame. The story of Kashmir is short but well framed. The author certainly knows very mush about Kashmir problem. his second story is not that good but the first one covers whole scenario of the Kashmir's pasts and currents. 'Azadi' by Arundhati Roy is not that good as we expect from her. Last line of the essay 'Azadi' says "India needs azadi from Kashmir just as much-if not more-than Kashmir needs azadi from India" is impressive touch, which makes us think about the problem of Kashmir in detail. Selected lines from Nehru's speeches under the heading of 'seditious Nehru' is really amazing work and biggest defense, a person can have if he is fighting for the future of Kashmir. Some poems by Habbah Khatun are also part of this book but they are not big force because of the language.

The negative part of the book is just one i.e. Kashmiri pandit. The compiler made a very big mistake by not mentioning Kashmiri Pandit issue in details. Non-existence of the very big issue of Kashmir's problem made it one sided book. Otherwise very strong book.

Arif Abdurahman says

Dalam memperlakukan Kashmir, Israel memberi nasihat India untuk mencontek caranya dalam menangani Palestina, sekaligus membeli senjata-senjata darinya. Pengantar menarik untuk konflik Kashmir. Merupakan kumpulan esai yang ditulis jurnalis, sastrawan, akademisi dan ilmuwan. Tariq Ali mengulas sejarah panjang Kashmir, dan satu laporan pendeknya soal kegeramannya atas pemberitaan krisis Kashmir yg ditutupi liputan

gosip. Arundhati Roy yg menyoroti nasionalisme hindu sayap kanan India. Esai berjudul "Fayazabad 31223" yang paling bikin gemas.
