**Historical negationism**

On **Aug 5, 2022** [Asif Iqbal](https://nation.com.pk/authorpost/columnist/asif-iqbal/)

August 2019 will always be re­membered as a Black Day, not only for the undemocratic norms of the largest democracy in the world—India—but also for the pitiful and dispir­ited residents of Indian Illegally Occupied Jammu and Kashmir (IIOJK). The Indian Presiden­tial order, relegated the spe­cial status of IIOJK not only to subjugate the Kashmiri peo­ple but also to make a step for­ward to legitimise its illegal occu­pation of Jammu and Kashmir (J&K). The lockdown, use of rape, torture, il­legal imprisonments and extra-judicial killings as a weapon have not been able to suppress the voice of Kashmiri Mus­lims. For the adherents of Hindutva ideo­logues and fascist Rashtriya Swayamse­vak Sangh (RSS), the question looms how can a Muslim population of over 8.56 million be subjugated? The Black Day was a thoughtfully well-planned move, with Ajit Doval (the infamous spymaster, the longest-running Indian National Se­curity Advisor, founder of Vivekananda International Foundation (VIF) and the staunchest proponent of RSS ideology), advising from the shadows to the BJP-led government. Like Hitler, Modi has estab­lished a cult around him and the BJP-RSS nexus has developed a myth projecting him as the only hope for pulling out In­dia from all crises. ‘India for Hindus only’ is not a vision but a fallacy and through the same scope, IIOJK is viewed. The hu­man rights violations in IIOJK speak vol­umes of the fascist policies of the BJP-led government where all dissident voices are being forced to silence.

No amount of rabid Indian propaganda, be it through their print or electronic me­diums or the strongest medium of Bolly­wood, has been able to either squelch or suppress the voices of freedom from the occupied valley. As if the efforts of chang­ing the demography of IIOJK through doc­tored and manipulated census were not enough, the abrogation of Article 35a and 370 of the Indian constitution, and sub­sequent passage of new laws, have now allowed non-residents specifically Hin­dus, to have property rights, obtain gov­ernment jobs and obtain domicile certif­icates thereof in IIOJK. India is adopting a multi-pronged strategy to legitimise and legalise its illegal occupation of Jam­mu and Kashmir; changing demography, a crackdown on the Muslim population claiming independence, portraying Kash­miri Muslims to the world as anathema to world peace in conjunction with false-flag operations, human rights violations in IIOJK as internal problems of India, and changing the narrative on IIOJK through the incorrect depiction of historical facts. There is a pattern to this infringement of the rights of Kashmiris.

Can a movie change the historical per­spective and perception? Well, this is what is perceived by the Modi govern­ment when the government fully ‘backed’ and promoted Vivek Agnihotri and his wife, Pallavi Joshi, who produced and re­leased a 2-million-dollar budget Bolly­wood flick, The Kashmir Files. The direc­tor, along with his wife, claims to have interviewed over 700 victims of the exo­dus over the course of two years before taking the project forward. No doubt the ultra-fascist Modi regime is panegyrical towards the producers, actors and the director alike since the movie projected the rights of Hindu Pundits and depicted Kashmiri Muslims as evil. What about the interviews of the pundits which stayed? What about interviews of Kashmiri Mus­lims? Was there any corroboration of in­terviews or the yell-tales? The movie claimed an exodus of 100-120,000 pun­dits out of a total of 140,000 pundits, but why did the rest stay? Shouldn’t they have left? The fact of the matter is that only 30-32 deaths were reported which over the years has touched the figure of 80 and then 217. Seeing the pattern and the ma­nipulation of historical data by the fanciful Modi government, it would seem that the figure may soon reach thousands.

Interestingly, the movie was released at a time when people from within and outside India started to question India on its human rights violations in IIOJK. On the contrary, despite pleasing the ev­er-fascist regime of BJP-RSS, this film does bring to the limelight the Kashmir issue. Probably it was not the intention of the producer but when the nail is in­tended to strike the wall, it does chip off some paint and cement—Article 370 and Article 35a of the Indian constitu­tion are back in the limelight and the world is certainly aware of the plight of Kashmiris. Surprisingly for the Modi government, the Singapore government banned the film citing it as a “one-sided portrayal of Muslims and the depictions of Hindus being persecuted in the on­going conflict in Kashmir.” However, the director, Vivek Agnihotri, and the pro­ducers (Tej Narayan Agarwal, Abhishek Agarwal, the BJP honeymooners—Palla­vi Joshi and Vivek Agnihotri), of the sup­posed epic stand vindicated to RSS al­legiance—the ultimate right against all wrongs, as seen through the lens of fas­cist BJP led régime.

The character of Professor Memon is played by none other than Pallavi Joshi, who depicted the ever-vocal and critical Arundhati Roy. In one of the scenes, Pro­fessor Memon says, “Kashmir is not an integral part of India, and it is a histori­cal fact”, and these are the exact words Arundhati Roy uttered in one of her in­terviews. This portrayal of Arundhati Roy is quite interesting as well as knotty be­cause while talking to the media actress Pallavi Joshi explicitly stressed, “I want people to hate my character” (sic). Unde­sirably projecting a dissident voice to the policies of the government, is akin to ask­ing people to hate all dissidents and what they believe in—a hate speech in itself. It is just like that anyone who speaks against the policies of the government is anti-na­tional, anti-BJP and anti-Hindu.

In January 1990, the Gawkadal massa­cre took place in Srinagar where the In­dian Army opened fire on protestors. As a result, around 50 people died and over 100 were injured, leading to fur­ther chaos and lawlessness in the region. Why there’s not a movie on this subject? Why does the state media remain quiet on these killings? Khalid Bashir Ahmad, a former Indian civil servant of Kash­mir Administrative Services, shatters the myth which revolves around the so-called Pundits in his book, “Kashmir: Exposing the Myth Behind the Narrative”. Mr Kha­lid Bashir Ahmad counters the claims of Kashmiri Pandit organisations that Kash­miri pandits have been suffering perse­cution at the hands of Kashmiri Muslims throughout Kashmir’s history.

Gawkadal Bridge Massacre, Kunan-Pashpora mass-rape case, Sopore mas­sacre and Bijbehera massacre are to name a few that took place after the 1989 insurgency in IIOJK, and these are the crimes that were committed by the Indian security forces and Indian army. Yet there were hardly any serious efforts to find the culprits and perpetrators since these were state-sponsored ‘oper­ations’ to undermine the sane voices of freedom. Every family in Kashmir has a harrowing story to tell. But the BJP-led government celebrated a movie that ig­nored millions of Muslims martyred in Kashmir in the last 7 decades by hand­picking a ‘tragedy’ that only strengthens its agenda. Will there ever be movies like ‘Gujrat Files’, ‘Mizoram Files’, ‘Nagaland Files’? No, because Modi and his acolytes suffer from the Dunning-Kruger effect. And sanity seldom prevails.

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