



**Aditya Kiran Kakati**

Junior Visiting Fellow,  
Institute of Human Sciences, Vienna

## **BODIES, BANDITS AND BADMASHES**

reading recalcitrance, resistance and governance  
through allegories of violence in the  
WWII Indo-Burma frontiers

This paper investigates material culture, cultural knowledge and violence as active resources that mediated engagements between states, populations, objects and discourses. WWII created ephemeral conditions for a competitive political economy for management of material culture and violence mediated by knowledge and discourses. All of these sought to be employed as modalities of structuring space, people and society in colonial and post-colonial frontiers. New socio-political re-alignments emerged from the War that mobilized cultural allegories of violence, control and resistance quite ambivalently.

The paper departs from discussions on wartime 'loyalty' of populations in the region which has largely presented the concept as a static and binary commodity. I illustrate how loyalty operated as a resource in political negotiations through objects of bodily mutilation. More importantly, inheritors of these legacies seemed to traverse spaces between collaborators, guerrillas, head-hunters, bandits, insurgents or nationalists for instance. Meanwhile, wartime objects such as mutilated body parts operated variously as resources, data and as metaphors. Thus, these mobile actors and material objects eluded and resisted labels of domestication while being accommodated into embedded cultural interpretations and imageries.

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AAKH, Hof 2.7 // Spitalgasse 2–4 // WIEN 1090