



KASHMIR UNDER LOCKDOWN

India's clampdown on the Muslim-majority northern state of Jammu and Kashmir is entering its fourth month, and while the right-wing government of Prime Minister Narendra Modi has exerted tight control over the flow of information out of the region, a bleak picture has nonetheless emerged. Thousands have been imprisoned, including political leaders. All democratic rights are being denied. Journalists trying to report on the situation have been beaten and jailed. Tourists were ordered out, movement for locals is restricted, communications with the outside world — landlines, mobile phones, the internet — is effectively cut off.

Kashmir's oppression and colonial exploitation started long before the formation of modern India. India became independent in 1947 but Kashmir has never been ruled by Kashmiris themselves.

Since October 1947, India and Pakistan fought multiple wars over Kashmir, both claiming to have the best interests of the local population in mind.

Because of the clampdown

- Local Kashmiris will have to compete with applicants from the rest of the country for the sought-after civil service postings for which previously only Kashmiris could apply for.
- Kashmir's tourism industry is important for its economy and absorbs many of the unemployed youths. But now the tourists have been thrown out and travel advisories are being issued by foreign governments, the fabled houseboats are out of business, and handicraft makers

and carpet-weavers - the great artisans of Kashmir - are broke.

- Apple and apricot cultivation is one of the mainstay of Kashmir's economy. With the clampdown and the unrest trade has been hit severely.

Modi's Hindu nationalist government's policies and actions are genocidal in intent and attempt to divide the working class of India into warring camps. Their 'One religion, One nation' theory is absurd in a country of so many diverse nations, cultures and religions.

India is facing a massive economic crisis exacerbated by the pollution and climate crisis making cities and country areas unliveable. All major Indian companies--from biscuit to vehicle manufacturers--have seen their fortunes dip over the last few years, forcing them to eventually call out to the government for support. The government has no solution so it's using divide and rule and aggressive military policies against workers. If they are not stopped this will bring disaster not only to India, but to the whole South Asian region and maybe to the whole world.

Workers must stand united against their actual enemies. Modi, his government and the military are defending the greed of the capitalists and landlords while workers starve and the planet burns.

Unity of all worker in the region regardless of their religion, language or nationality is the way to fight back. Mass protest and industrial struggle can defend the people in Kashmir and advance the rights of all workers in India and the world.

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