

NEW WAVE

The New Wave is a Socialist newsletter reporting on issues of the working class, revolutionary politics, and world affairs

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Massive anti-coup protests in Yangon in February 2021

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Foreword

The first month of 2024 has come to an end. Yet again, we see everywhere the victories of reaction, met with fierce resistance of working class and peasant forces. The youth are in rebellion against the old order everywhere, whether in peaceful protest or in armed insurgency. All the while, the crisis of capitalism reveals to the fullest the reactionary character of the ruling class.

While the world is heads towards climate catastrophe the imperialist powers of the world are planning new wars. Reactionary regimes world over are arming themselves, be it Iran, or Israel. The latter's genocidal war on Palestine has managed to pull the rest of the wider region of West Asia/Middle East into another potential global conflict.

This new war will drag in the wider Indian Ocean region, and spread into South Asia, overlapping with the existing conflict between India and Pakistan on the one hand, and between Pakistan and Afghanistan on the other. All the while the Houthi rebellion in Yemen has thrown the world's oceanic supply chains into chaos with their attacks on shipping on the Red Sea. Thus, the Israeli war on Gaza has overlapped with the genocidal Saudi led and US backed war on Houthis.

The assaults of imperialist reaction have not been taken without challenge. Across the nations of the imperialist core, and across Arab countries in North Africa and the Middle East, and across muslim countries, and Africa, there have been protests against Israel and the US. The working class, youth and oppressed across the world, are unified in their condemnation of Israel's reactionary war and the support it receives from the US led western imperialist bloc.

The capitalist nations of the world, not only revealed their viciousness this year, but also their brazen hypocrisy. The western powers which shed crocodile tears over Russia's war on Ukraine, now stand resolutely by the side of their beloved Israel while it massacres Palestinians. Even the International Court of Justice could not order a ceasefire which would have saved countless lives. About seven hundred have since died from Israel's bombings since the verdict earlier this month.

In times like these, when the weight of reaction seems impossible to bear, it is worth remembering that reactionary victories are only short lived, delaying the inevitable collapse of an exploitative and corrupt system. In Myanmar we see hope as the decades long rule of the military regime unravels before our eyes in spectacular fashion. The 'tatmadaw' or grand army, has been losing territory to the combined forces of the United front of People's Defense Forces and the ethnic rebel armies of the Kachin and Karen. The military regime had reimposed itself with a violent coup in February of 2021, and since October of 2023, they have been pushed back across Myanmar. They have lost strategic border towns across the Indian and Chinese border regions, isolating the country by land.

The youth, workers and peasants of Myanmar show us, no matter how daunting and overwhelming reaction might be, through committed and united struggle, they can be brought down. The fate that has befallen the junta in Myanmar today, will come to the reactionaries of Saudi, Israel, Iran, and for that matter, even Modi in India !

The revolution in Myanmar



Youth rebels of the People's Defense Force

On the 1st of February 2021, the military took over Myanmar once again in a brazen coup. They dissolved the democratically elected government led by the NLD, and placed the party's leader Aung San Suu Kyi under arrest. Protests broke out throughout the country with students, workers and even Buddhist monks uniting against the military regime.

Rangoon was the scene of massive mobilizations of thousands of people uniting to protest the military regime, risking their life and limb to do so. The military responded with harsh crackdowns. The military showed their repressive fangs in these actions. Even as the spectre of the pandemic loomed over the impoverished and isolated nation, the junta turned their energies in imprisoning the Burmese populace under their grip. The people

did not take this lying down. The youth of Myanmar took the lead in organizing an armed resistance against the military rule, organizing under the People's Defense Force. Together with the rebel armies of the Karen, Chin, Shan, and Arakan states, they form a united front against the rule of the Tatmadaw.

It has been over two years since the coup happened. Myanmar which had been in a state of war and civil war since its inception, once again devolved into the spiral of civil war, as secessionist rebellions re-emerged in force. Today this war appears to be reaching a climax, as the Karen, and Shan rebel armies take over vital overland crossings into India and China.

These unprecedented developments show the weakness of the Tatmadaw, and show the very

real prospect of independence for the long struggling peoples of Myanmar's Northern frontier region. Should they succeed, the military regime may as well collapse, and open the prospect of a return of Burmese democracy.

The armed insurgencies led by the People's Defense force, and the various secessionist insurgencies, constitute a democratic struggle in Myanmar that strikes at the heart of the revolutionary struggle in Myanmar.

The legacy of world war 2 :

Myanmar has the dubious distinction of being one of the only countries in the world which has had civil wars for almost the entirety of its existence. This is the legacy of its troubled history with problems rooted in the days of the British Raj.

Myanmar was annexed to the British Empire, and made a constituent part of the British Raj, after the third Anglo-Burmese war of 1885. The British brutally crushed the resistance of the feudalistic lords and implemented changes which turned Myanmar into a colony for resource extraction. Of chief importance was Myanmar's mineral wealth, Myanmar's oil, forestry products (the famous Myanmar teak), and rice.

By annexing Myanmar, the British had in their hands one of the most fertile regions of Asia, they could vie for control of South and South East Asia's rice trade. The biggest beneficiaries of British rule in Myanmar were Scottish entrepreneurs and civil servants who effectively 'ran' Myanmar, the Chettiar money lenders of Southern India who dominated finance in Myanmar, and became the owners of a quarter of all Burmese land, and a small section of the comprador elite of Myanmar.

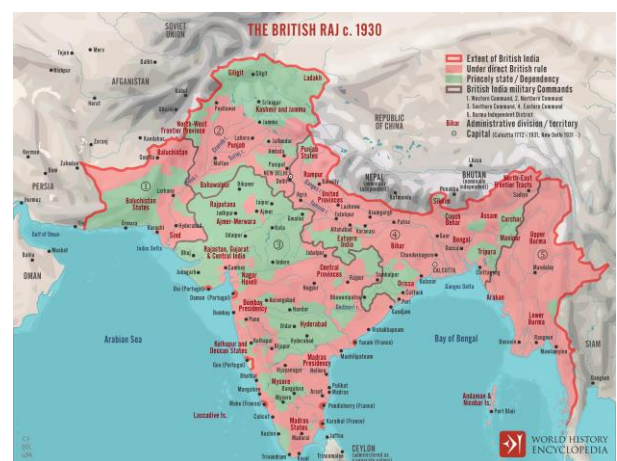
Much like India, British rule brought about the destruction of old pre-capitalist social and political relations, and their replacement with capitalist ones. The impact of this was the creation of modern bourgeois institutions like the University of Rangoon, which would

become epicentres of anti-colonial resistance in Myanmar.

The Burmese independence movement grew parallel to the Indian independence movement, and briefly converged in 1940 when Aung San met with Subhas Chandra Bose at Ramgarh during the Congress session there, under the shadow of the second world war.

The war would prove to be the most decisive event in modern Burmese history. British rule, which had already been strained from two decades of intense anti-colonial national movements, the first world war, and the global economic crisis in 1929, was given its body blow when the Japanese invaded and steamrolled the unprepared British colonial forces in Myanmar. Within a few months, five decades of British rule fell, but what came in its place was a worse more oppressive Japanese rule.

The Japanese pushed Burmese to forced labour to build railroads and infrastructure for their wartime needs. They massacred entire populations, and intensified the exploitation of Burmese agriculture much like the British had done. Despite this, Aung San and many other national leaders sought Japanese assistance in fighting the British.



Map of the British Raj including Burma/Myanmar in 1930

The alliance with Japan showed the weakness of Myanmar's bourgeois leadership. Much like in Indonesia, Aung San and Ba Maw

cooperated with the Japanese during their occupation of Myanmar. The Burma Independence army proved that they were not above sinking to the levels of the British in committing atrocities, when the BIA destroyed hundreds of minority Karen villages over the course of the invasion. Nearly two thousand Karen were killed in the Irrawaddy campaign. This incident highlighted among other things, the rift between the Bamar majority who dominated the plains, and the ethnic groups of the hills and border areas of Northern Myanmar.

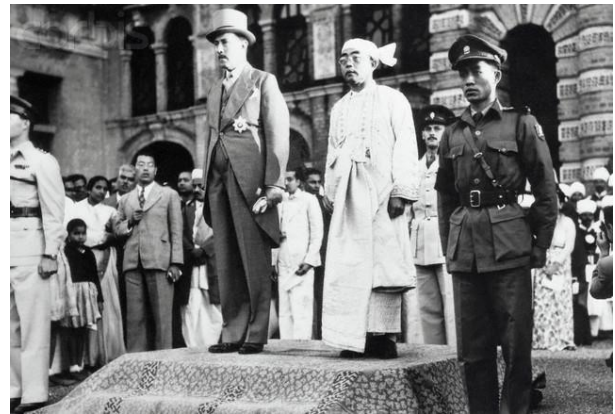
The cooperation with the Japanese did not last long, thinly veiled efforts by the Japanese to keep Myanmar under their thumb while pretending to grant independence did not convince anyone. In 1943, the so-called 'state of Burma' was set up, having no better relationship with Japan than colonial Myanmar did after 1937. The exploitation of Myanmar for the benefit of Japan's war aims intensified. The next year, Aung San would break ties with Japan and switch over to the very allies he had been fighting against for most of his life.

The Japanese lost the war and were driven out of Myanmar, but left the country in a ruinous state. The British following a policy of abandonment, did no better. The relentless bombing campaigns, the blockades, and the policy of arming certain ethnic groups against the Japanese, left a toxic situation in Myanmar. The worst case of these was the Rohingya, who were armed by General Wavell's V-Force to fight the Japanese, but all this did was inflame inter-communal tensions within Arakan. Muslim Rohingya killed Arakan Buddhists, and the latter retaliated with the help of the BIA and Japanese, twenty thousand Arakan Buddhists and forty thousand Rohingya were killed in these clashes, and forever scarred inter-communal relations.

Despite the devastating consequences of arming ethnic minorities, the British continued the policy of arming ethnic minorities in North Myanmar in their campaign against the Japanese. It did not help that the national

movement of Myanmar was Bamar-centric, and failed to win over the ethnic minorities in common cause against British rule. The fighting in the Second World War only inflamed pre-existing tensions further. Myanmar would enter independence with these tensions.

A mutilated independence :



The British handover of Burma/Myanmar

Myanmar won its independence through armed struggle. The British were forced to concede independence to Myanmar at a time when the empire was exhausted, nearly bankrupt, and its military capabilities stretched to beyond their limits. India witnessed massive protests across the country in the aftermath of the Red Fort Trials, where three commanders of the Indian National Army were put on a war trial. India burst out into a revolutionary wave, nowhere was this more acute than Calcutta which saw whole sections of the city barricaded by students protesters, and city squares being taken over by marching protesters. The upsurge would culminate in a mutiny of the naval ratings in Bombay, quickly followed by ratings at Karachi, Calcutta, and Madras.

In Myanmar, the populace was already armed and ready to fight, battle hardened by the fighting in World War 2. Aung San had a sizeable army behind him to enforce independence, the Burma independence Army, which would become the foundation for the tatmadaw, the army of modern Myanmar. The new united front which ultimately came to rule

Myanmar had unified every anti-Japanese force under the Anti-Fascist People's Freedom League, an umbrella organization formed by Aung San and the thirty comrades to fight Japan. Negotiations were initiated which culminated in the Aung-Atlee Agreement that formed the basis of the Panglong Conference. Aung San had crafted the only possible way in which a united and free Myanmar could be won, through granting autonomy to the various ethnic groups. However, he would not live to see how his vision unfolded.

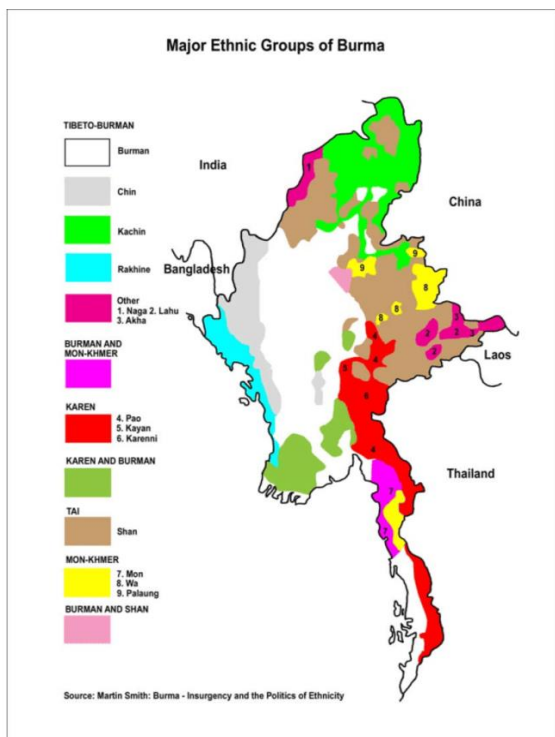
The Panglong Agreement took place on the 12th of February 1947, and became the basis of an independent Burmese state, in July 19th of 1947 the founding father of Myanmar, Aung San, along with eight other ministers, was gunned down by assassins. Overnight, Myanmar was left leaderless when it needed leadership the most. The mastermind of the assassination, a rival bourgeois politician, U Saw, was tried and hanged for the assassination plot.

conflict within the context of the cold war. Over the course of the Burma campaign, Northern Myanmar had been held by Chiang Kai Shek's National Revolutionary Army. Even after their withdrawal, the influence of the Chinese nationalists remained in this troubled part of Myanmar. Over the course of the Chinese civil war, the lost division of the Chinese nationalist army would end up capturing a substantial part of Northern Myanmar, destabilizing the region and forcing the fledgling war torn country into another deadly conflict. The legacy of this period was to transform Myanmar into one of the key countries of the South East Asian drug trade. This disaster was made possible with no small help from the CIA, who wished to take advantage of the anti-communist army in Myanmar for their own ends.

The legacy of the Panglong Agreement would be failed hope and bitterness between ethnic groups. A communist insurgency initiated the very year that Myanmar won its independence from Britain, and ethnic groups organized to oppose their union with Myanmar. The Panglong conference was flawed with some groups having no representation whatsoever and others being clubbed together. Importantly, there was no representation from the Rakhine region or from the Mon people. The Karen and Karenni had no representation in this conference.

Myanmar had won its independence under the government of the Anti-Fascist People's Freedom League, a united front combining with its various ethnic groups who had taken arms against the Japanese, and the Communist Party of Myanmar, which shed any struggle against Britain in favour of collaborating with it to fight Japan, even before the Japanese invasion began. This united front was united only on paper, in truth there were over fifty conflicting groups. The flaws were fully exposed after independence when the Communist Party of Myanmar initiated an insurgency against the Burmese government.

The Communist Party following the Maoist line, wished to replicate the success of the



Map of ethnic groups in Myanmar

Myanmar entered its life as a new nation leaderless and mired in conflict. A country already ruined by the fighting in world war 2 would soon find itself in the throes of a new

Chinese civil war in Myanmar, but all this actually achieved was a lot of bloodshed and brutal reprisal from the AFPFL government. To make things worse, discontent over the botched Panglong Conference, led to the rebellion of the Karen people in Central Myanmar. The Communist Party had supported rebellion in the Rakhine, the Shan states, and the Arakan rebellion, but dismissed the Karen rebellion and its leadership as reactionary. Thus, a three way conflict ensued between the Communist Party on the one hand, the Burmese AFPFL government on the other, and the Karen rebels. The consequences of this conflict was ruinous for the fledgling country.

Civil wars and ethnic conflict :



A Burmese Communist delegation returning from failed peace talks in 1963

The conflicts which began soon after independence, continued for decades, with the ethnic war continuing into modern day.

The first major war broke out against an insurgency by the Communist Party of Burma beginning in 1948 and lasting until 1989. A combination of internal division, and brutal suppression by the Burmese government eventually brought the Communist party insurgency to an end. This was but one of many in the long line of failures of the protracted people's war line of the Maoists.

While the communist party insurgency raged, the fledgling Burmese state had to deal with the rebellion of the Karen, and the occupying forces of the KMT's lost army. The war torn

country was devastated, and would soon be left leaderless by the assassination of Aung San and most of his cabinet.

Myanmar's bourgeois democracy, such as it was, already found itself at the precipice. The British had built Myanmar into an agrarian and extractive colony, this economic set up did not change after independence, and in fact hasn't fundamentally changed even today. The weak foundations were ravaged further by the Second World War, whose legacy is still felt in the war torn country, as it sees the culmination of decades of civil war.

The new country came under the leadership of Prime Minister U Nu, who attempted unsuccessfully, to lead Myanmar towards an industrial welfare state. U Nu was a left leaning bourgeois leader, in the mould of India's Jawahar Lal Nehru. Myanmar had far less to begin with than India did in terms of industrial infrastructure and had to deal with the destruction left in the aftermath of the second world war. So it began at a disadvantage.

Despite great optimism after independence, the Burmese state could not deal with the consequences of the failed Panglong Agreement, nor the devastation left by the fighting in the second world war. The seeds of a future military rule were sowed from the very origin of the Burmese state, in the hegemony of the Bamar majority, the failure to address the ethnic group's right to self-determination, and in the socio-economic backwardness of Myanmar, still trapped in an agrarian economy.

In 1962, Burmese democracy ended with a coup conducted by General Ne Win, who became Myanmar's first dictator. His action pushed Myanmar to the abyss from which it is still unable to escape.

Dictatorship :

Ne Win led the 'socialist' faction within the armed forces, and was closely aligned with Prime Minister U Nu. However, this political orientation did not stop him from conducting

the coup. Before the coup of 1962, Ne Win had led the caretaker government at U Nu's invitation, effectively suspending bourgeois democracy in Myanmar in 1958. A new government was formed with U Nu as Prime Minister in 1960, and a mere two years later, the military launched a coup, with the excuse that the civilian government was inept and could not administer Myanmar. There was fear among the ranks of the military that federalism and granting autonomy to the ethnic nationalities would eventually lead to the dismantling of the Burmese Union. This threat was especially acute for the Kayah and Shan minorities who were pressing for their right to separate under the 1947 constitution. Tensions only grew further.



General Ne Win, the first military dictator of Myanmar

The fear would lead Ne Win to institute one of the most brutal dictatorships in the world, under the cover of 'socialism'. In truth, he created a state capitalist dystopia, an economic system geared towards the maintenance of military rule, and an autarky to isolate Myanmar and further the impoverishment of its people. As inadequate and disappointing as the parliamentary period was, the dictatorship would prove to be a disaster, one that wasn't as apparent at the outset for the relatively bloodless nature of the coup.

Soon after Ne Win seized power, students at the Rangoon University struck against the government. Protests broke out across the country. The military regime responded with harsh crackdowns. The students protests turned violent in the defence against crackdowns by the military regime, who fired on student

protesters and destroyed a student union building. All universities were closed for two years following the coup.

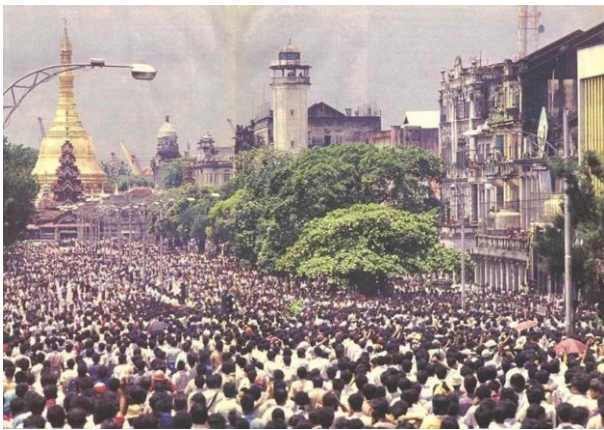
This was only the beginning of a hellish period of Burmese history and set the tone for the disasters that would follow. Ne Win was not an ideological politician, he aligned himself with the socialist faction of the AFPFL and sympathized with Marxists, but never bothered to understand or implement those ideas. He concocted a hodge podge ideology which supposedly blended Buddhism and Marxism into what he called 'The Burmese way to Socialism'. It was in practice a doctrine of isolation and autarky designed to serve the interests of the military regime.

Ne Win nationalized most of the economy, and begun the expulsion of those deemed foreign. The Anglo-Burmese community and the Indian Tamil community were the worst affected by the expulsions. The worst aspects of Burmese nationalism were shown in the coup regime in the brutal imposition of Bamar hegemony and the brutal xenophobia shown towards the Indian and Chinese communities in Myanmar. Even before independence, the anti-Indian riots in 1930, and the mass evacuation of Indians following the Japanese invasion, the actions against Indians and ethnic minorities by the Burmese Independence Army, all revealed the great weakness of the Burmese independence movement. However, it was only after Ne Win's coup, that the xenophobic tendencies in Burmese nationalism became institutionalized.

As Ne Win's grip on power grew, the state of Myanmar worsened. The civil war showed no signs of dying, organizational rights were curtailed, and freedom of speech was stamped out. Ne Win who was infamous for being superstitious, withdrew several large denominated currency notes on recommendation of his astrologer, who suggested the number 9 was auspicious for him. The new denominations of 45 and 90 kyat were issued on the recommendation of his astrologer, leading to economic chaos and the loss of life savings for millions of Burmese citizens.

Ne Win's most toxic legacy however, remains the new citizenship law which was promulgated in 1982. The new law denied citizenship to anyone deemed a foreigner, who had settled in Myanmar before 1823, the year the British began annexing Burmese territory. This law is used to deny the Rohingya citizenship, and strip many Indians and Chinese of any right to citizenship despite having been born in Myanmar and lived in Myanmar for generations. It was a xenophobic piece of legislation, which laid the foundations to turn Myanmar into a Bamar ethno-state.

The 8888 uprising and Aung San Suu Kyi :



Massive crowd of protesters in Rangoon/Yangon during the 8888 uprising

Ne Win's misrule undid much of the potential benefits from some of his more progressive early policies, such as the abolition of usury, the abolition of landlordism in the countryside, the nationalization of the commanding heights of the economy, and the protection of peasant's right to property. The culmination of misrule and exploitation at the hands of the military regime led to the massive student's protests in 1988, led by General Aung San's daughter, Aung San Suu Kyi.

The protests followed the tradition of radical student's movements in Myanmar which were crucial in ending British rule. The protests of 1988, were popularly called the 8888 uprising after the calendar date which marked the peak

of nationwide students protests, on 8th August 1988.

What started as a protest at the Rangoon Arts and Sciences University evolved into a nationwide revolution. The military regime under General Ne Win rightly felt threatened, and responded with force. Martial law was declared, soldiers opened fire on protesters, hundreds were killed, and thousands were put under arrest and tortured. Despite brutal crackdowns by the army, the protests did not die down, students were joined by monks, and wide sections of the peasantry. Soon, the countryside erupted along with the cities. Military positions were surrounded by protesters.

By the end of August, it became impossible for the military regime to hold on to power, Ne Win suddenly announced his resignation. This act dampened the momentum of the 8888 uprising, and the military prepared their counter-action. Ne Win's resignation was followed by another coup on the 18th of September.

The new constitution of the coup government undid Ne Win's 1974 constitution and promulgated a new one under the so-called State Law and Order Restoration Council (SLORC). The new military ruler Saw Maung would oversee one of the most brutal chapters in modern Burmese history, the crackdown and destruction of the 8888 protests. At least 3000 were killed, many as a result of torture in prisons.

In the following year the country was officially renamed Myanmar. The new government was still cautious of the revolutionary momentum unleashed by the 8888 protests. Fearful of another outbreak of protest, they conceded to having a general election. This would be the first general election in Myanmar since the military coup of 1962.

The 1990 general elections saw Aung San Suu Kyi and her national league for democracy win by a landslide. Had the election results been honoured, military rule in the country would

have ended. That was not to be the case, instead the tatmadaw would annul the election results and reimpose military rule. With protesters on the backfoot, the army succeeded in reinstating control, and the brief moment of bourgeois democratic restoration ended with military rule. The new regime would be no less cruel than Ne Win's, but Myanmar would begin opening up to the world, and allow foreign corporations to exploit its mineral wealth more freely.

All the while the armed rebellion of ethnic groups such as the Shan and Karen people continued to rage.

The SPCD and the 'roadmap to democracy' :

Faced with mounting pressure from every corner of Burmese society, the military realized soon that it could not simply keep responding with coercion. Coercion worked to contain the insurgency in the Northern and bordering areas, but it could not be used to indefinitely keep the masses of the majority Bamar people of the central plains subjugated. The military required concessions to pacify the people before it could dominate them and secure its rule. The heavily rigged and manipulated election of 1990 was meant to do just that, to fool the masses while the military retained ultimate power in Myanmar, not unlike how the army acts in Pakistan.

The 'roadmap to democracy' framed by the so-called 'State peace and development council' was designed to do just that. Rigged elections were the order of the day in order to keep the supremacy of the military intact while creating the façade of bourgeois democracy. Such thinly veiled dictatorship defined the regime that ruled Myanmar during the period following the 8888 uprising, implemented by General Saw Maung, and continued by General Than Shwe. The first elections to be held after 8888 uprising was in 1990 which Aung San and her NLD won by a landslide, but the military regime did not recognize and put her and much of the party under arrest.

The transformation of Myanmar from total isolation to re-emerging as a major energy resource exporter (as it was under British rule), occurred during this period from 1992 to 2011. The retreat from state capitalist authoritarianism as exercised by Ne Win, towards a stage managed democracy similar to modern day Pakistan, was necessitated to fully exploit energy export policies. The exploitation of cheap labour and resources for the benefit of foreign capital, went hand in hand with the oppression of the masses by the military, especially the subjugated national and ethnic groups in Myanmar's North. It's worth noting that the bulk of Myanmar's energy resources lay in zones which are contested with Karen, Chin, and Shan ethnic groups in the country's North, while a strategically significant area lay in Arakan where the genocide against the Rohingya is being perpetrated.

The road to 2021 :



The moment of the military coup in February 2021 caught live by a fitness instructor

The junta's strategy of democratic pretence had its benefits, as the new regime headed by former military leader Thein Sein, ensured Myanmar's entry into the ASEAN and further opened its economy, inviting investments from ASEAN, India, the US, and China. The exploitation of Myanmar's resources would only deepen.

This strategy culminated in 2015 with the Thein Sein government releasing Aung San Suu Kyi from arrest, and conducted an ostensibly fair

election which saw Aung San Suu Kyi's NLD win by a landslide. Despite this, the military held a strategic share of the seats through appointment. About 25% of the seats in the lower house are reserved for military appointees.

There was much hope after these elections that Myanmar would change course. Aung San Suu Kyi could not become Prime Minister owing to a constitutional rule preventing her, as her husband and children were foreign citizens. Instead, she was given a defacto position created for her, as "state counsellor". Aung San Suu Kyi's new Myanmar was still the Myanmar of the juntas, behind a façade of bourgeois democracy, elections, and limited freedoms of press, a genocide of Rohingya was being perpetrated.

A particularly virulent section of Buddhist monks emerged during this time, who used social media to preach hate of Muslim Rohingya minorities. The face of this new type of fundamentalist Buddhist was Asin Wirathu, who had the full backing of the military junta. State Counsellor Aung San did nothing to try and prevent the military from initiating its genocidal actions against the Rohingya, which has resulted in the mass expulsion of 750,000 Rohingya in 2017, and the deaths of tens of thousands.

Asin Wirathu incited Buddhists against Rohingya, which resulted in violent pogroms around Arakan. As far as the treatment of minorities went, the new 'democratic' government was not much better than the military regime that had preceded it. The destruction of the Rohingya in Arakan came together with major Chinese funded infrastructure projects, such as Sittwe. Securing the Arakan was key to develop Myanmar as an essential center of trade and logistics in the Bay of Bengal region. The 'price' of this development was paid by the Rohingya people.

Promoting such communal and religious hatred served the military, as it distracted the populace

from their country's exploitation by the junta and foreign capital. Rohingya muslims suddenly became the main enemy. Aung San Suu Kyi, proved to be a useful idiot in serving this agenda.

The contradictory 'democratic' regime continued until 2021. While the charade of democracy played out, fundamentalist Buddhist monks continued to incite violence against muslims, and the army continued to commit its genocide against Rohingya. All the while, the war against Karen, Chin and Kachin groups continued. Not long after the establishment of civilian rule in 2011, the tatmadaw began a series of campaigns against the ethnic rebel groups, resulting in enormous suffering for the people of the border region. Hundreds of thousands were displaced in these military operations, with thousands dead. The military campaigns did not cease even after Aung San Suu Kyi's government coming into power.

Coup and revolution:

The contradictions of Myanmar's dysfunctional bourgeois democracy would culminate in 2021 when the Tatmadaw under the leadership of general Minh Aung Laing conducted Myanmar's most recent military coup. Preceding the coup was the general election of 2020 which saw a sweeping victory for Aung San Suu Kyi and her National League for Democracy. The army saw this as a threat and took action.

The elections were fought within the limitations of the 2012 constitution which retained a stake in government for the military. Despite its flaws, the limited bourgeois democracy that Myanmar had experienced had granted rights to its workers and peasants, freedoms to organize and agitate, that made the otherwise exploitative set up somewhat bearable. The concession to democratic rights was a major victory of the workers and peasants of Myanmar won through the struggles of the 8888 uprising, and the monk's protests.

The coup would reverse all of that, in one fell swoop. Myanmar became an authoritarian dictatorship once more. The military would commence its genocidal campaign of repression against ethnic minorities, which had been picking pace since 2015.



Areas under rebel control since operation 1027 in gold and blue, areas under junta control in pink

The immediate aftermath of the coup, saw widespread protests in Rangoon with trade unions, students unions, and Buddhist monks, coming together to challenge the military regime. Teachers, doctors, and students, the country's youth was at the forefront of this agitation. The military responded with coercion. Rangoon/Yangon saw military snipers fire at protesters, soldiers could be seen gunning down protesters on the streets. Soon, the internet would be shut down, and Myanmar would be isolated from the world.

The protests however, did not die down. The youth took up arms, and began to organize urban guerrilla bands. Gun fights in the streets were not an uncommon sight. The youth army eventually reorganized in the countryside, joining forces with the ethnic armies of Karen, Kachin and Shan. The coup had sparked a

revolutionary uprising, which had now expanded by combining with the pre-existing war of the oppressed nationalities in Myanmar's bordering regions.

The protests coalesced into a National Unity government to fight the coup regime, which calls itself the State Administrative Council. The National Unity Government organized an armed wing with youth volunteers under the "People's Defense Force". The united force of the PDF and all other ethnic armies, launched its major offensive against the Tatmadaw on the 10th of October 2027, under operation 1027. The offensive has gained numerous successes, and pushed back the junta forces all over the North, cutting off the land routes to China and India. As of today, it is believed that the tatmadaw has lost a third of all townships, albeit controlling the major population centers around Central Myanmar and South Myanmar.

The civil war has reached a turning point where the army is facing the frightening possibility of its ultimate defeat in the face of a united front of ethnic armies, and the people's defense force. Joining in this civil war, is the offshoot breakaway force of the Myanmar National Democratic Army, which broke off from the Communist Party of Myanmar. Adding to the conflict is the Wa state army which has been described as a proxy of the Chinese government.

The Burmese regime is unravelling, and its impact felt across the border in China and India. One of the immediate fallout has been the destabilization of India's North Eastern states. The ethnic conflict in Manipur has worsened owing to the actions of the Tatmadaw and its scorched earth strategy. Thousands of Zomi refugees have flooded into India, adding to the ethnic tensions in the region between Kuki-Zo and Meitei. There have even been border clashes where the Tatmadaw have attacked fleeing refugees into Indian soil with artillery strikes and air strikes. The Modi government, has remained silent about this.

As of now nearly 1.6 million people are internally displaced, and 55000 civilian buildings have been destroyed. The war is still active, and the tatmadaw has continued to stumble, and it seems more and more likely that the PDF and the National Unity Government would score a final defeat of the Burmese military regime.

Tasks ahead :

The situation in Myanmar has already reached the point of armed struggle and insurrection. The civil war which raged since Myanmar's independence, has reached a new level of intensity with the armed forces being pushed back on all fronts. The idea that a formidable military which has held Myanmar in an iron grip, armed to the teeth with weaponry from India, China and Russia, could unravel as spectacularly as this, is as inspirational as it is incredible.

However, even if the military junta should be destroyed, and the army destroyed and rebuilt from the ground up, the future of Myanmar would remain capitalistic. That means, Myanmar's position as a semi colony for the exploitation of agrarian, mineral resources, and energy resources, would remain unchanged. Only now, we would have the veneer of bourgeois democracy to hide the exploitation. The conflict would likely be subjected to the geo-political rivalry between China and the US, with the US aligned ASEAN nations leaning towards the National Unity Government, while China attempts to save the failing tatmadaw regime. India would attempt to 'balance' both sides to gain the biggest benefit from whichever faction wins.

The NUG for their part, has attempted to placate both China and Western imperial powers. France was among the first countries to formally recognize the NUG as the legitimate government. The NUG has called on the People's Defense Force to refrain from attacking Chinese projects, despite these infrastructure projects and their funding being a vital support for the military regime. The

ethnic rebel armies such as the Karen independence army, or the Kachin independence army, have done little to change the socio economic realities of the people within their zones of control.

At various points in time India or China has attempted to back the insurgents, not out of principled concern for the right of self-determination, but to influence the politics of Myanmar, and secure resources. Both eventually competed to influence the military regime, indirectly strengthening the repression of the tatmadaw over the Burmese people.

Despite these realities, it must be acknowledged that the war in Myanmar is a war for bourgeois democratic rights. The resolution of the right to self-determination of the oppressed nationalities, the ending of autocratic military rule, and the secularization of Burmese society, against the weight of religious reaction from the likes of Asin Wirathu, are all necessary tasks of the Burmese revolution.

The two most essential tasks for a Burmese revolution are :

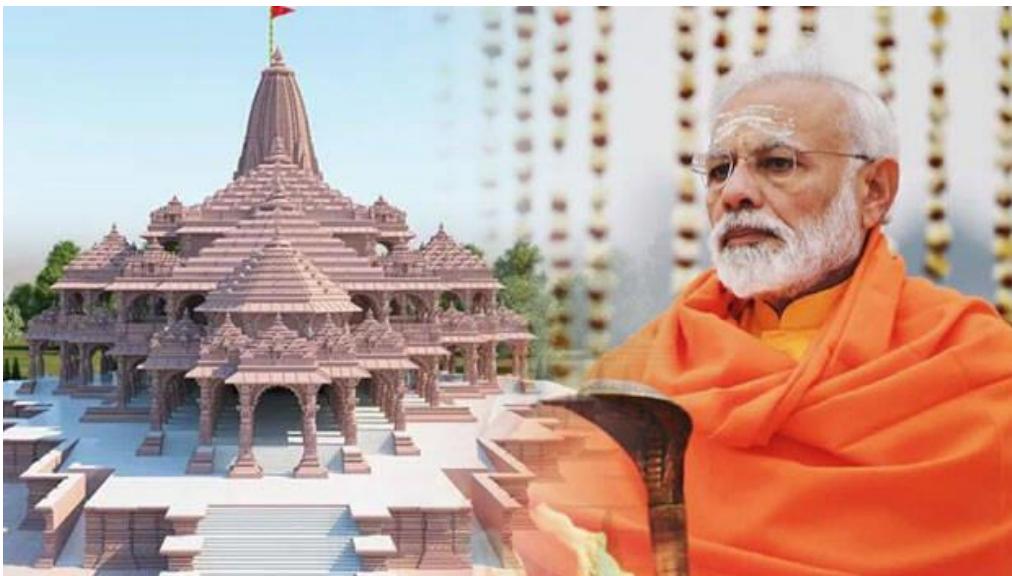
- 1) **Securing the right to self-determination:** whether through the achievement of federal autonomy, or through outright independence, the Kachin, Karen, Mon, Rohingya, and other ethnic groups who live along the bordering regions of Myanmar, must be granted their right to self-determination. This includes, especially for the non-Buddhist minorities, the right to freely practice their faith, and culture. The Burmese bourgeoisie has proven over the 80 years since independence that it is not up to the task.
- 2) **Securing the independence of Myanmar:** Myanmar is a semi colonial nation, dependent on the exportation of raw materials, largely under the control or influence of imperial capital. Critical infrastructure, raw materials, and

finance are held by a million strings in the hands of foreign capital, chiefly Chinese, Indian, Japanese and US capital. The tatmadaw is the instrument of foreign capital to keep the exploitation of Myanmar going. Aung San Suu Kyi's NLD and now the NUG, is positioning itself to play this role. **Securing Myanmar's independence, means the nationalization of foreign capital, and the commanding heights of the economy, as much as it means the ouster of the imperialist's tool that is the Tatmadaw military regime.**

If Myanmar's bourgeois leadership are failing, the task falls squarely on the shoulders of the

workers and peasants to conduct the bourgeois democratic revolution. This brings us to an inescapable conclusion that without the seizure of power from the workers and peasants, the bourgeois democratic revolution of Myanmar would come undone. The vehicle to achieve this, is the revolutionary party, and an inescapable conclusion is to build this party in struggle.

Myanmar is in the midst of a revolutionary war, one which can define the future course of the country. It depends on revolutionaries to give this struggle the leadership it needs. International solidarity is the need of the hour. A revolutionary Myanmar, can become a bridge to a wider revolution in South and South East Asia, and spread over to China and East Asia.



The Ram temple inauguration : India's Shame !

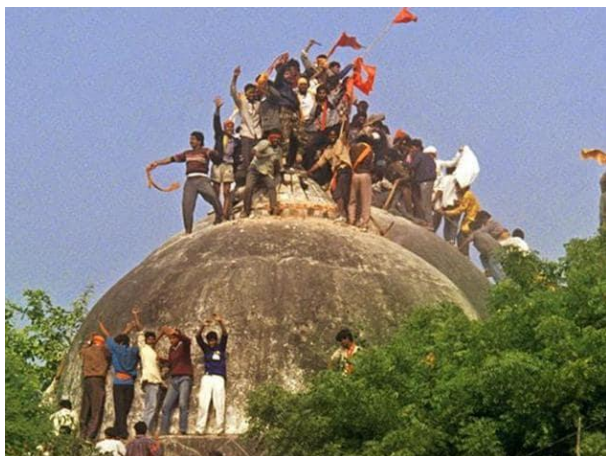
On the 22nd of January, India would be host to a spectacle. One day before the birth of Netaji Subhash Chandra Bose, and four days before India's annual Republic Day celebration, the Ram Janmabhoomi temple at Ayodhya would be inaugurated.

Perhaps for the first time in the history of India, a temple inauguration will be treated as a national event, to be celebrated with holidays, and a live telecast. The Prime Minister himself, will be at the scene along with members of his cabinet. It is an unmistakably political event,

and one being treated as a test of an Indian's nationalism.

Among those attempting to come for the temple inauguration, are Dalits from Rajasthan's Jhalawar district. The temple administrators have barred their entry. In the land of Ram, caste hierarchy reins.

A monument to Hindutva :



Hindutva mobs tearing down a dome of the historic Babri masjid

Public memory in India is short, so the events of 6th December 1992 have been forgotten by the public at large. On this day, the BJP took out the now infamous 'rath yatra', or chariot ride, with the explicit objective of demolishing the 16th century mosque built by the Mughal Emperor Babur. The Babri mosque was a landmark in the temple town of Ayodhya, a fine example of 16th century Indo-Islamic architecture.

Ayodhya is considered to be the birth place of the mythological Hindu God King Rama, who is believed to be one of the Avatars of God Vishnu. He is the chief character and hero of the story of Ramayan, a tale of good versus evil, where the righteous king Ram prevails over the greedy and ambitious Brahmin demon king of Lanka, Ravana.

The popularity of Lord Ram increased during a period of political turmoil and war of the 12th to 15th centuries in India, a time when India was affected by Turkic invaders from Afghanistan and Central Asia. The primacy of Ram in the

Hindu deity is a phenomenon seen more commonly in North India than East or South India where the worship of Shiva or the female goddesses of Shakti cults such as Kali and Durga are more popular.

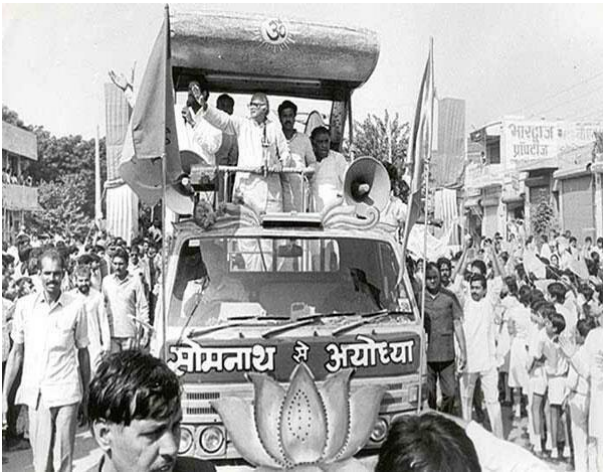
The political advantage of leveraging Lord Ram to project a project of brahminical supremacy, and a Hindu state, was precisely because of this geographic spread. North India, especially the states of Uttar Pradesh and Bihar accounts for the bulk of the gangetic plains, the core of the so-called 'hindi belt'. The religious text of Ramcharit Manas is a much revered text here, and to use Ram as a figurehead of Hindutva was a tactic to endear the masses of North India to the agenda of a Hindu Rashtra. This strategy has been successful to the point where the BJP today has near total dominance over this region.

The rath yatra to demolish the Babri mosque was a national movement of the BJP, which catapulted it to national popularity. Mobs of thousands descended on the temple town of Ayodhya, tore down the historic mosque, and in its aftermath, communal riots flared up across the country with over a thousand dead. Once riots began in India, it spread to Pakistan and Bangladesh, where Hindu minorities were attacked. There, temples were destroyed, in retaliation for the mosque destruction.

The babri mosque demolition wasn't simply a grand act of vandalism, but an attack on the cultural and historic identity of Indian muslims. Now, that assault is being justified and sanctified by the inauguration of the Ram temple.

The Ram temple of Ayodhya is the crowning moment of this larger project of converting India from a secular bourgeois democracy to an authoritarian hindu supremacist state. While the Ram temple stands tall today, a proposed mosque nearby has not even started construction.

The chronology of events :



The Ram Janmabhoomi Rath Yatra led by L.K Advani

The area of the Babri mosque was home to two other venerated sights for Hindus, the 'Sita Rasoi' and the Ram 'chabootra'. Both of these structures were built in the late medieval period before the construction of the Babri masjid. The present existing structures however are of a later date.

For most of the 16th, 17th and 18th centuries, North India was under the rule of the Mughal Empire. The Mughal ruler, Babur constructed the temple on what was possibly the site of an unfinished temple. In truth, no one knew which site if any was ever considered a temple to the birth place of Lord Ram, whose existence itself has never been established through any verifiable record. The belief in Lord Ram is an article of faith for Hindus.

It is only after the British became involved in the scene, did conflict begin to emerge over the site of the Babri mosque. Feeling threatened by inter-communal unity in North India, the British spread a rumour that the site of the Babri mosque was the site of a Hindu temple dedicated to 'Ram lalla', or the baby Ram. That site would be among the holiest of Hindu sites, if proven true. The first large conflict over the use of the site emerged in 1855 between Hindu monks and local Muslim devotees.

In the aftermath of this conflict, the mosque was divided into zones for Hindus and Muslims. Neither community could enter into

the other's zone of prayer. Hindus could offer prayers at the 'Sita Rasoi and Ram Chabootra' and only enter from the East side, while Muslims could only enter from the North side and offer prayers at the mosque itself.

This state of affairs compromised the demands of both communities but was no lasting solution. The next stage of the conflict came after independence, in 1949. A Hindu priest claimed that the idol of 'Ram lalla' somehow appeared inside the mosque. The event sparked conflict, and to keep the peace, the then Congress government sealed the mosque preventing Muslims from praying inside the mosque. Muslims would never pray in the mosque ever again.

The next significant development would come in 1986 when the Rajiv Gandhi government unsealed the mosque. This was a time when the Congress began to appease Hindutva, beginning with Indira Gandhi. The strategy of using religious fundamentalists and chauvinists to counter a growing communist movement was the norm after the emergency in 1978. A fallout was the Sikh separatist movement in Punjab, the growth of the Marathi Hindu chauvinist party the Shiv Sena, and the rise of the RSS and BJP.

The Congress, trying to appease both sides, amended Muslim personal laws to deny Muslim women maintenance beyond the iddat period, despite a Supreme Court order in the Shah Bano case. The same party, unlocked the Babri mosque and allowed the entry of Hindus into the mosque compound. Prayers remained forbidden there.

This move by the Congress did not make the forces of Hindutva any quieter, or dent the momentum of their movement. In 1989 the BJP under L.K Advani began the Rath Yatra on 25th September 1990. The Rath Yatra galvanized Hindutva reaction across the country.

In 1991, India entered economic crisis, and soon it would be accompanied by political crisis. The Congress government had collapsed, The Rath Yatra raised reactionary sentiment

throughout the country, wherever the chariot went, riots followed. The chariot journey could not be completed however, as the Bihar government then headed by Chief Minister Lalu Prasad Yadav, placed the rally leader L.K Advani under arrest. This prevented the rally from causing more mayhem, and prevented its ultimate goal of reaching Ayodhya, but the damage was already done.

By the time the fateful date of 6th December 1992 came, the situation had gone out of control. Mobs of thousands of Hindutva reactionaries descended on the sleepy temple town, their sole aim was to demolish the Babri mosque. The chief minister of the state of Uttar Pradesh, then under the BJP, made sure the police would do nothing to stop the ensuing vandalism. The Prime Minister failed to prevent the riot.

The mosque was torn down, following the demolition, riots ensued across the country. The police attempted to clamp down with their usual ham handed ways, at least two thousand died. The mosque was demolished, the forces of Hindutva triumphed. This act by Hindutva mobs was presented as an independent action by 'people', as if there was 'popular will' behind the demolition of the historic mosque. The truth was, the events of 6th December 1992 were a direct consequence of the actions of the BJP over a decade before this. The Rath Yatra by L.K Advani was the catalyst that transformed an otherwise fringe demand for a temple at the site of babri mosque, into a nationwide counter-revolutionary movement. We are still reeling from the consequences of this.

Judiciary at the heart of the reaction :

Since 1992, the building of a Ram temple at the site of the razed mosque was a dream of the Hindutva movement. A dream that remained unfulfilled for over twenty years. The first BJP led government to complete a full term was under Atal Bihari Vajpayee, between 1998 and 2003. The government which oversaw the further liberalization of India's economy, the

sale of several Indian public sector enterprises like Maruti, and led India through the Kargill war, could not build the temple on the site of the mosque. For the next 11 years, India would be ruled by the Congress party, whose legacy would remain the failure to decisively defeat the forces of Hindutva, failure to rein in on reactionary parties, and laying the groundwork for the present regime of surveillance, state repression, and the brutal capitalist exploitation of India's hinterlands and tribal regions.

Prime Minister Narendra Modi was elected to power in 2014, having completed a full term in 2019, he was re-elected again for another five years, which ends this year. It was in this election year, that the Ram Temple was finally inaugurated, despite being unfinished. For those supporting the BJP and the Hindutva project, the inauguration of the temple was a massive victory and great boost to their morale right before the decisive national elections.

At the end, it was the judiciary that played the most decisive role in this saga. The Ram temple trust approached the Allahabad High Court, which recognized the site as the birth place of Lord Ram, with dubious evidence, citing only the faith of devotees. The court divided the land into three parts, with the temple trust getting land for the temple, and waqf board getting land for a mosque. The decision was appealed against and the matter was eventually decided at the Supreme Court.

The Supreme Court in 2019 eventually greenlit the construction of the Ram temple, essentially legitimizing the vandalism over the historic mosque and brushing aside the deaths of thousands in the aftermath of the riots that ensued from the rath yatra and mosque demolition.

Such a development would not have happened, had the Modi government not focussed on taking over the judiciary. The government essentially won the loyalty of the judges by ensuring post-retirement benefits. Appointments into prestigious positions such as state governors, or chairmen of central

committees, or a diplomatic position, are enough to ensure their loyalty. Despite earlier efforts to more directly influence the selection of judges failing, the creeping way in which the judiciary fell into the lap of the BJP showed it's sign in the form of recent political judgments of the Supreme Court, first on the Ram temple, then on the case against Article 370.

Just as in Germany before the Nazi takeover, it was the judiciary that was in the center of this counter-revolution.

Why oppose the Ram temple :

There are hundreds of temples dedicated to the Hindu God King Ram, none of them have the political and social character of the Ram Temple being constructed in Ayodhya. The religious and spiritual significance of this temple is irrelevant. Had that not been the case, the absence of two of the four 'shankaracharyas', whose position is equivalent to the popes of Hinduism, would have mattered more. Instead, the inauguration of an unfinished temple, and the spectacle surrounding the Prime Minister Modi leading the ceremonies, was turned into a grand spectacle of Hindutva.

The sycophants of Bollywood, and billionaires who made their support for Modi and the Hindutva project open, had lined up for this temple inauguration event. The guests highlighted the character of this event and the party that orchestrated it. The temple was built at a cost of Rs. 1800 crores (\$216 million), while hundreds of homes were razed and small businesses shut down.

Ayodhya has morphed from a charming temple town with historic architecture, to a playground for the rich and hypocritical. A seven star hotel and a flashy new airport have been announced for the town, to cater to the expected flood of wealthy pilgrims willing to throw money on the

great Hindutva project, and pretend to be spiritually inclined.

An ominous sign of things to come :

The Ram temple judgment has opened a pandora's box. There are several other sites in North India which have been the targets of demolition by the Hindutva movement. The most important of these are the Gyanvapi mosque in Varanasi and the Shahi Idgah in Mathura. The popular slogan among Hindutva supporters is "Ayodhya to Jhaanki hai, Kashi Mathura Baki hai" meaning that Ayodhya was only a prelude, Kashi and Mathura are due to come.

The BJP has political power, and with it, they have normalized discrimination towards muslims, they have normalized and legitimized sacrilegious acts such as mosque demolitions, for the construction of temples. With laws such as the Citizenship Amendment Act, and the National Registry of Citizens, the BJP seeks to institutionalize discrimination against muslim minorities. Their places of worship are no longer safe, their cultural identity is being crushed, and the idea of India as a secular state where all religious communities could be treated equally is being eroded.

The construction and inauguration of the Ram Temple is not India's pride, it is India's shame ! We must stand resolute in condemning this project, and prepare ourselves to fight against all such projects that are due.

LONG LIVE HINDU MUSLIM SOLIDARITY !

DOWN WITH THE BJP !

DOWN WITH HINDUTVA !

LONG LIVE SOCIALISM AND SECULARISM !



Truckers on strike

A wave of transport strikes

On the 9th of January, bus drivers of the Tamil Nadu state transport corporation declared an indefinite strike. On the 1st of January truckers across the country struck work in protest against the central government's new criminal code. The new code under section 106(1)and(2) imposes harsher penalties for hit and run cases. The conditions for the penalty are harsher than the earlier existing laws.

The countrywide trucker's strike brought supply chains to a halt, and threatened the wheels of the economy with fuel shortages piling. That strike was withdrawn after a day after assurances by the central government.

About a week later, bus drivers of the Tamil Nadu State Transport Corporation began an

indefinite strike, beginning from 9th January. That strike was subsequently postponed after an order from the Madras High Court, but the strike action plan remains.

On the 18th of January, Karnataka truckers went on an indefinite strike, again on the issue of the new criminal code. In addition to this, issues of amenities to truckers such as wayside stations facilities and the dismantling of truck inspection at border areas.

The new wave of strikes among transport workers, be it passenger or goods transport, highlights the exploitative conditions of work in this sector as well as the risks associated with transportation work. The burden of the risks are put on the shoulders of the workers, while

transport companies, and companies utilizing the trucker's services, keep the benefits.

The Trucker's strike :

India's new criminal codes were passed into law on the 25th of December during the winter session, which saw much of the opposition suspended from the lower and upper house of parliament. The law was steamrolled through much like the farm laws. Not unlike the farm laws, the criminal codes too faced public backlash, and it came in the form of an all India trucker's strike.

The main area of contention was the new provision in the Bharatiya Nyay Sanhita (New Indian Penal Code). The new codes make the law on hit and run cases far more stringent, with the possibility of 7,00,000 rupees penalty, and jail time for 7 years for anyone found guilty. On the face of it, the strike might seem like demanding a license to kill. However, the context must be understood.

Truck drivers have fewer means of paying for the fine, and are put under enormous pressure to transport goods within strict deadlines for their pay. The burden is put squarely on their shoulders, to transport goods safely, while road and highway infrastructure remains inadequate. There are over 40000 accidents taking place on Indian roads annually, though highways account for just 5% of India's road space, they account for the majority of their accidents.

The absence of lane discipline is a key reason why accidents take place. In this, undue blame is placed at the feet of truckers, who are always the target of mob violence in any case of accident. It is for this reason truck drivers are usually hesitant to report cases before the police. Without any safeguards, poor driving conditions, lack of safety gear on the trucks, and pressure on delivery schedules, the new law does nothing to improve the conditions, and simply adds to the heavy burden on truck drivers.

The protests lasted for two days at the national level, while the Karnataka truckers have

decided to go on an indefinite strike beginning on the 18th of January. For the two days that the truckers stayed off the roads, essential supplies couldn't be delivered, and the economy practically came to a halt. Road transport accounts for two third of total freight transport in India, with the focus on expanding road connectivity, and lack of interest in expanding rail transport, the dependence on truckers will only grow along with their burden.

The government of the capitalists cares little for the worker toiling behind the wheel. Steamrolling through laws without any consultation, or thought for the consequences on workers is a typical character of the BJP under Modi. It took the combined action of truckers to puncture his arrogance.

The bus workers strike in Tamil Nadu :

Not 8 days after the end of the trucker's strike, India witnessed another major transport workers strike, this time in the state of Tamil Nadu involving the drivers of the Tamil Nadu state transport corporation.

This was not the first time that bus workers struck. In 2021 a massive bus workers strike took place in Maharashtra, when the workers of Maharashtra state transport corporation struck work. The government responded with mass dismissals, and coercion. Like past strike actions from transport workers, it brought the economy to a standstill and forced the government's hand. However, the coercive actions by the government had its impact to eventually get the busses moving again.

The core issues of the strikes did not get resolved, the bus drivers continued to suffer from low pay, and had to struggle to reverse the illegal terminations. In November of 2023, bus drivers were back on strike in Maharashtra, led by Sadavarte's union demanding the implementation of the 7th pay commission and improving the condition of the busses.

Mirroring these actions, the workers of the Tamil Nadu state transport corporation struck work in 9th January of this year. Among the

issues raised by the striking drivers, include the signing of the 15th wage revision agreement, filling vacancies in bus driver and conductor posts, releasing dearness allowance for retired drivers who have not been relieved for the last eight years.

The strike was off to a bad start in the midst of the festive season. Once again, the judiciary intervened against the workers, compelling the union to end the strike early. The strike action was postponed to the 22nd of January.

While the Tamil Nadu bus strike struggled to take off, bus workers at the Karnataka State transport corporation launched their own strike for issues of pay rise and improved conditions.

Conclusions :

What is common in both cases of truckers and bus drivers strikes, is the underlying causes. Transport workers in both sectors are forced to carry the burden of costs while the government of capitalists transfer the benefits away to capitalist hands.

In case of public transport, this is done by constantly undermining it in favour of private road transport, creating infrastructure that is geared to favouring private vehicles and enacting policies focussing on expanding ride share services. This eventually leads to worsening public transport, public transport corporations suffering losses, and the burden of these losses transferred over to the workers who have are underpaid and overworked.

The same fate befell the truckers who have been given all the burdens of transport, and are deprived the benefits. The impact of criminal laws on the trucker's condition of work was never considered when the new criminal code was passed. Instead, it was rammed through with no opposition and no consultation.

Trucks, often in ramshackle conditions, have to deal with a huge burden of transportation and strict deadlines with little pay. The pressure on

truckers only grows when having to deal with police authorities and the danger of mobs in hit and run cases. The increasing burden on truckers goes hand in hand with a massive shift in freight transport from railways to roadways, together with a massive expansion of India's road infrastructure. India today has the second largest road network in the world, while it's railways struggles with keeping pace.

The strike actions to improve working conditions and pay deserve our fullest support. To get success needs militant leadership, and a revolutionary political leadership to support it.

The need for solidarity

As we had stated before in case of the MSRTC strike, for the success of the transport strike, solidarity is absolutely necessary. A strike in the field of transportation is sensitive, while attacking the capitalist order and the bosses, it also results in hardship for the worker who would be deprived transportation, and suffer the effects that comes from goods not being transported.

For the workers to identify with their class brethren in strike rather than the government of capitalists trying to deprive them, requires militant leadership. So far, that is shown to be missing for the most part, when the CITU could suspend their strike from a court order. Nor has there been any successful effort at solidarity protests led by unions, or political leadership. Ultimately, the actions by the transport workers must build up to systematic change in the country. Such systematic change where transportation policy serves the needs of the people, and does not transfer all the burdens to the transport workers while giving the benefits to the capitalists. Such a system needs socialism !

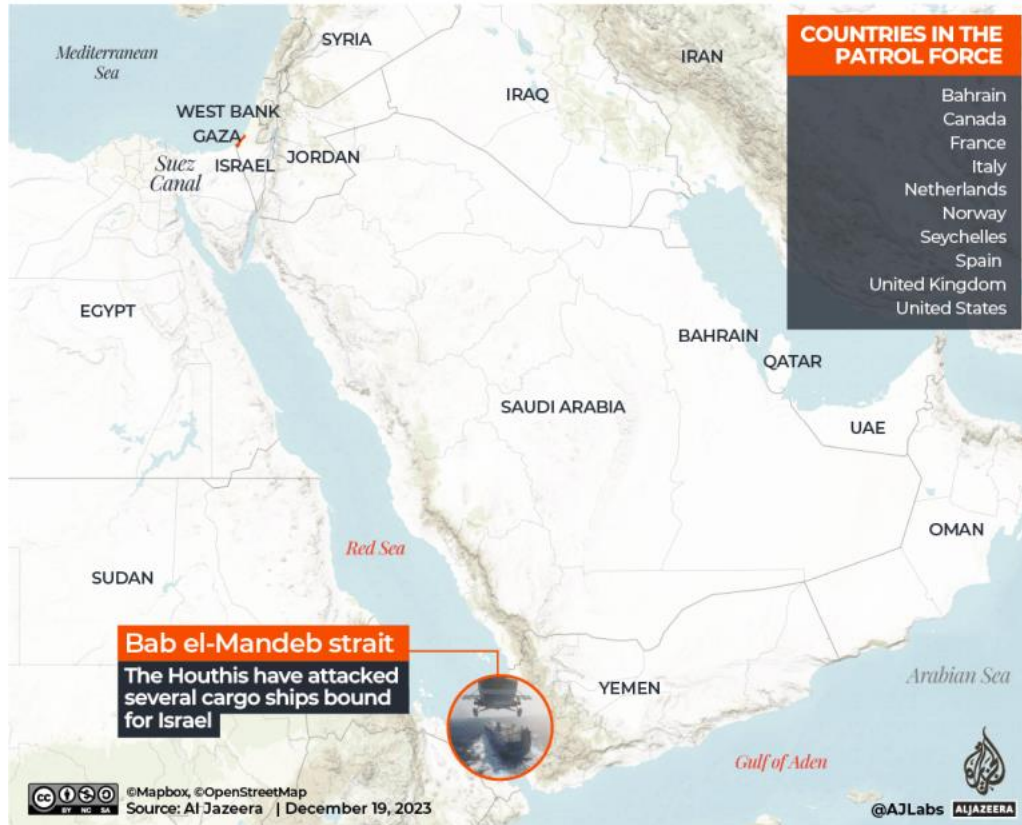
FULL SUPPORT TO TRANSPORT WORKERS !

LONG LIVE WORKING CLASS SOLIDARITY !

ISRAEL-GAZA WAR

Red Sea patrol force to counter Houthi attacks

The United States has announced a 10-nation force to protect trade in the Red Sea after attacks by Yemen's Houthi rebels forced shipping companies to halt operations.



Map of the Red sea theatre, image credit Al Jazeera

Imperialist Aggression Against Yemen May Lead to War in the Region

The last weeks have seen a series of imperialist attacks against Arab peoples and the SWANA region.

Israel has continued to carry out a series of attacks against Hezbollah in southern Lebanon, causing several casualties. On January 8, it arrived in the southern suburbs of Beirut to kill Wissam Tawil, the senior commander of Hezbollah's Radwan forces; in the West Bank, it attacked refugee camps and mosques; the most vicious recent murder was the running

over of a young man by a tank and the killing of three young men aged 22-24 in the north of the occupied territory.

After Israel killed a Hamas leader in Lebanon and Iran suffered an attack that left at least 84 dead, the United States sponsored a drone strike on January 4 to kill the leader of a pro-Iranian group, Harakat Hezbollah a-Nujaba, based in Baghdad.

Now, a U.S.-led coalition has launched airstrikes against Yemen and Houthi rebels for attacking ships on commercial shipping lanes in the Red Sea in support of Palestinians in Gaza. The airstrikes hit the Yemeni capital of Sanaa, killing and injuring fighters and civilians.

These actions show the total impossibility of the existence of two states in Palestine due to the destructive saga of Israel and U.S., imperialism, and that the strategy of the resistance must be the destruction of the state of Israel.

On the other hand, they show Israel and imperialist policy is striving for the capitulation and total submission of the region's governments.

The ruling bourgeoisie of these countries, including Saudi Arabia, Iran, and Lebanon, are ready to accept this. Because despite all these attacks, they still refuse to confront Israel militarily. The strategy of these governments in the region is to make a pact with the Zionists through the Abraham Accords.

A Regional War to Defeat Israel

This will only be achieved with the formation of an alternative leadership to the governments of the region. If this happens, it raises the possibility of changing the correlation of military forces in the region.

So far, only the Houthis and the Palestinian resistance are engaged in military fighting.

The Houthi leadership has claimed that the imperialist countries are entering into "the greatest madness in their history" and that they, like Hamas, are prepared for a long-term struggle.

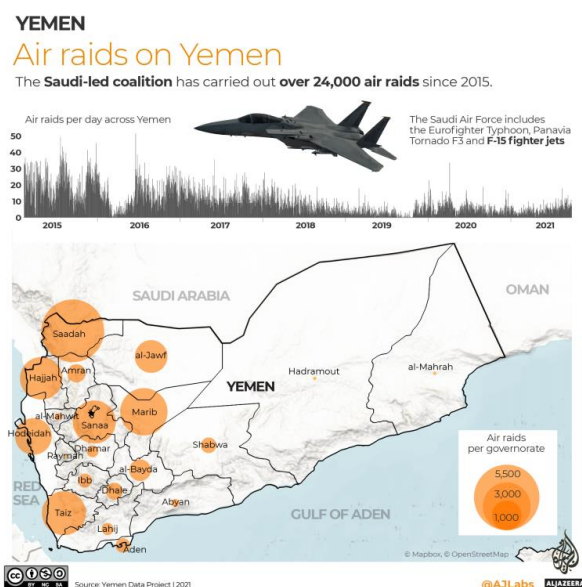
Chanting "Death to America, Death to Israel," hundreds of thousands of people, many of them

armed, marched through the streets of Sanaa carrying Yemeni and Palestinian flags.

In Bahrain, where the government is a U.S. ally, thousands of people took to the streets to protest the country's participation in the military coalition. Demonstrations also took place in Malaysia and Indonesia.

On January 13, thousands gathered at Bank Junction in central London and in Washington D.C. in solidarity with Gaza, calling for a ceasefire and an end to the escalating U.S. attacks in Yemen.

On January 15, a U.S.-owned and operated Marshall Islands-flagged container ship was hit by an anti-ship ballistic missile fired by Houthi militants. On the same day, Iran targeted the capital of Iraqi Kurdistan with ballistic missiles, killing four civilians. According to the Revolutionary Guards, the attack targeted an Israeli spy center in an indirect and totally insufficient response.



Saudi air raids on Yemen

Rejecting the Imperialist Attack on Yemen

The Houthis are insurgents who control most of northern Yemen, including the capital Sanaa.

The group emerged in the 1980s and is backed by, but not completely subordinated to, Iran. They differ from the Iranian proxies not only because they are followers of the Zaydi Shiite doctrine, but also because they are economically autonomous from Tehran (they receive state revenues from the northern regions and control smuggling networks in the area, mainly arms), and have their own political agenda and their own power structure.

Differently, they are also the fruit of the Arab Spring, when they gained significant momentum and in 2014 succeeded in overthrowing the Saudi and imperialist-backed government and seizing power in much of Yemen. A series of negotiations led to a cessation of fighting in 2022, with troops backed by Saudi Arabia and the United Arab Emirates.

What they recognize most about Iran is that it represents a model of state resistance to the West.

The group honed its military skills during years of civil war. In fact, it has been more successful as a military group than as a government.

Yemen is an extremely poor country, but the attacks it has carried out against ships in the Bab el-Mandab Strait, which separates the Red Sea from the Gulf of Aden and the Indian Ocean, have economically affected the imperialist multinationals, mainly in the oil and natural gas sectors.

Therefore, U.S. imperialism has created a multinational force to protect the routes: Operation Prosperity Guardian, with the participation of the United Kingdom, Bahrain, Canada, France, Italy, the Netherlands, Norway, the Seychelles and Spain, and attacked Yemen in a totally disproportionate reaction. This may lead to a regionalization of the conflict.

But it is difficult to justify an attack on Yemen when its forces attacked some ships, while at the same time Israel continues to commit genocide with its brutal bombing and encirclement of Gaza without any consequences from any country.

The Palestinian Resistance Creates Obstacles for Israel



A seized israeli tank on the Gaza border 7th October

On January 1, Israeli Defense Minister Yoav Gallant announced the withdrawal of two brigades from Gaza. Each brigade consists of about 4,000 soldiers. He also announced that three more brigades would be withdrawn.

The Israeli government has begun to feel the cost of the war against the Palestinian resistance at home, both economically and politically.

The cost of the war to Israel has been estimated at about \$60 billion. Admittedly, the goals set for the war were not achieved, as evidenced by the failure to dismantle Hamas and release the hostages, just as the assassination of top Hamas commanders remains illusory.

Even if they claim that their forces are proving more adept at identifying and dismantling booby traps, maneuvering to avoid ambushes, and evacuating the wounded, this is an admission that the conflict has a long way to go.

The Israeli army command admits that it is fighting a “complex and complicated war.”

All This Points the Way to Political Crisis

There is a crisis in Netanyahu’s coalition, the most right-wing in the country’s history. On Saturday, January 6, thousands of people demonstrated in Tel Aviv and in front of Benjamin Netanyahu’s private residence in Caesarea, demanding immediate national elections in the midst of the ongoing war between Israel and Hamas in Gaza [6].

But if the Zionist government has its way, the policy of genocide in Gaza will continue.

As the figures of international institutions and agencies have been reporting, at least 25,000 Palestinians have been killed and 60,000 injured. The Wall Street Journal reports that nearly 70% of Gaza’s 439,000 homes and half of its buildings have been destroyed, as well as much of the water, electricity, and communications infrastructure, and that health care is “beyond repair.” Of the 36 hospitals, only 8 are functioning, and two-thirds of the school buildings were damaged, as were churches and more than 100 mosques. According to the Associated Press, in two months of war, Israel has caused more destruction in Gaza than the battle for Aleppo in Syria or the attack on Mariupol in Ukraine, fueled by two bloodthirsty and murderous dictators: Bashar al-Assad and Vladimir Putin.

Imperialist International Law is Impotent in the Face of Aggressions from Oppressor States

We are following the case filed by South Africa against Israel at the International Court of Justice for genocide. The trial began on January 11.

But unfortunately, this verdict will not have any concrete effect in stopping Israel’s attacks against the Palestinian people.

We have already seen, in the case of Russia’s aggression against Ukraine, that Putin violated the norms of international law. Ukraine has the right to territorial integrity and political independence, even in the context of Russia’s “recognition” of the independence of Donetsk and Luhansk. Russia has committed an act of aggression against Ukraine, but the international institutions did nothing beyond a formal disapproval of its actions.

During the first of two days of hearings at the International Court of Justice (ICJ), South Africa claimed that Israel’s offensive, which destroyed much of the coastal enclave and killed more than 23,000 people, was aimed at “the destruction of the population” of Gaza.

They sought to prove that Israel’s political and military leaders, including Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu, were among the “inciters of genocide.” This is evident from the manner in which this military assault is being carried out.

Israel rejected the accusations of genocide as false and baseless, saying that South Africa was speaking on behalf of Hamas; their discourse is that the accusation is full of hypocrisy and lies, and that are the ones fighting against genocide.

South Africa’s defense has cited as evidence Israel’s sustained bombing campaign and statements by ministers such as Israeli Defense Minister Yoav Gallant, who said that “we are fighting human animals, and we are acting accordingly.”

The 1948 Genocide Convention, enacted after the mass murder of Jews during the Nazi Holocaust, defines genocide as “acts committed with intent to destroy, in whole or in part, a national, ethnic, racial or religious

group.” This is what the Israeli army is demonstrably doing.

International law requires that every effort be made to distinguish between combatants and civilians, and that only civilians be protected. The numbers show that the Israeli army has made no distinction and kills Israel’s own hostages.

In addition, Israel has imposed a total blockade, depriving the entire Gaza Strip of basic necessities such as fuel, electricity, drinking water, and hospitals. It has blocked humanitarian aid, even through Rafah, which connects the Palestinian territory to Egypt.

The tribunal is expected to rule this month on possible emergency measures, but most likely will not rule on the genocide charges, and those proceedings could take years. In the end, even if the tribunal rules, it has no way of enforcing any measures.

It will be the demonstrations of workers and youth around the world, the political and military support for the Palestinian resistance, and the divestment and boycott campaigns against Israel and its sponsors that will be able to change the course of the war. The mobilization of our class will increase the possibility of the military defeat of the state of Israel and the establishment of a secular, democratic, and non-racist Palestinian state.

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