

NEW WAVE

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Farmers on the march in Delhi in 2024

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Foreword

Delhi has been the scene of some of the biggest mobilizations in India this century. Undoubtedly, one of the largest and most intense of these was the farmer's protest in 2020-2021. The response of the Modi government then was one of cruel apathy, coercion and overwhelming force to cow the protesters, these tactics failed, and it was forced to concede. Today, these scenes have repeated themselves again.

The farmer's protest comes at a time when the ruling BJP is recovering from a string of defeats, both in state elections, and in the face of mass protests. The disaster of the pandemic, the economic crisis it ignited, and the arrogance of the Modi government, had turned the masses of India decisively against the BJP. It is only thanks to the sheer incompetence and corruption of the opposition bourgeois parties, both regional and national, that the BJP can present itself as a better alternative.

Buoyed by reactionary mobilizations around the Ram temple, the BJP appears to have recovered partly from its defeats. Now with the national elections around the corner, the BJP is once again having to face the masses of peasants and agricultural workers on the streets in Delhi.

The BJP is not the only autocratic bourgeois regime being challenged. In India's neighbourhood, we have the dictatorship of the Burmese Junta collapsing like a house of cards. In Bangladesh, India's key ally the Awami League's own autocratic rule may appear to have won the day in the last elections, but it faces the masses of garment workers and youth on the streets in opposition to its corruption and

oppression. In Pakistan, the military's machinations to undermine and overturn the democratic will of the people appear to fail as its puppets fail to win a majority in the national elections. The youth, workers and peasants of the Kashmir, and Balochistan are on the march, bravely fighting against the Pakistani regime.

The events unfolding in South Asia and the world show that even in a world where the forces of capitalist reaction seem ascendant, class struggle does not cease. On the contrary, it is part and parcel of capitalism in crisis, that the bourgeoisie has to resort to autocratic tactics to suppress the working masses.

It is in these conditions that the pressures on the capitalist status quo grow most acute, and we move from peacetime normalcy, towards pre-revolutionary conditions. It is worth remembering now, that capitalist victories such as they are, exist only as temporary victories. They are a force forever holding the line against the tide of history that flows perpetually against them.

The future belongs to the working class, the youth, and its allies oppressed by the capitalist system. The alliance of workers and peasants can win revolutions, overthrow the most tyrannical regimes, and become a powerful force against capitalist reaction. The need of the hour is revolutionary leadership, which can lead the working class to socialist revolution. We must learn these lessons from history, to arm ourselves today.

ALL OUT SUPPORT TO THE FARMER'S PROTEST !



Police open fire on protesting farmers

Once again, the farmers of Punjab are on the march. The scenes near Delhi are reminiscent of the great mobilization in 2020 when farmers rallied, in the midst of the Covid pandemic, to challenge the three farm laws forcibly passed by the Modi government. Their struggle had gone on for a year, and ended in an inspiring victory which galvanized the masses against the Modi regime.

Now, the farmers are back on the road, at a time when Narendra Modi and the BJP seems ascendant. The BJP might feel buoyed by victories in the key states of Madhya Pradesh, Chattisgarh, Maharashtra. They were emboldened enough to push through the three new criminal codes, in much the same ham handed and forcible manner as the farm laws. However, the protesting farmers stand as a reminder, that even if the institutions of bourgeois democracy can be bent and broken to their will, the people can't be so easily cowed.

The protests of 2020-2021 :

At the core of these protests is the crisis of Indian agriculture, and at the root of this crisis is the process of primitive capitalist accumulation. Since the liberalization of the 1990s Indian capitalism has grown at the expense of Indian

agriculture. The growth of liberalized trade in commodities has resulted in monopolies over trade in crops, with large capitalist firms, retail chains, and traders dominating the trade in food products.

The market performed as it was designed to, squeezing out small and marginal farmers from competition, forcing them into debt traps, and compelling them to adopt unsustainable practices such as monoculture and over use of fertilizers, pesticides and genetically modified seeds. The result, has been nearly 300,000 farmer suicides between 1995 and 2014 alone. All the while agro trading companies, retail giants like Reliance Fresh, and large capitalist farmers, continue to thrive.

As petty agriculture collapses, more and more people continue to be driven into cities for work, adding to the growing ranks of the reserve army of labour, the unemployed. Meanwhile, agricultural workers and marginal farmers have to bear the worst of the agrarian crisis. They must suffer unemployment, starvation wages, and the prospect of seasonal work in the cities, begging in the streets, or starvation. The farm laws were not meant to uplift this section of society. The biggest beneficiary of the laws would be the agro corporations, and trade monopolies.

The laws would lead to the end of Agricultural Produce Market Committees controlled trade centers called mandi, the laws had no commitment to minimum support prices and benefit only those farmers and farming companies who can afford to sell across states. All the while, the central government would expand food procurement reducing further the power of states.

Before the big mobilization of 2020, there were numerous local and regional protests by farmer's unions. The mobilization in Maharashtra, Tamil

Nadu, and across South and North India, underscored the tensions in the countryside. The big mobilization in Delhi was in many ways a culmination of a growing nationwide agrarian movement. The farmers' bodies, unified under the umbrella body of the Samyukt Kisan Morcha (united farmer's front), which unified forty unions.

The protest which was initiated in the midst of the Covid pandemic, while the Indian government imposed one of the most stringent lockdown regimes, the farmers braved the authorities, the cold and the pandemic to protest the Modi government. Over the one year period, the government at first replied with repression, then backed down and attempted to exhaust the movement, and finally surrendered. At the end, 600 farmers were dead, but the Modi government had been handed one of its worst humiliations till date.

On the road again :

After the mammoth year long protest in 2020, the farmers are back on the streets protesting. The middle of February saw the farmers back on the move, after mobilizations during the Republic Day. At the end of the previous protest, the government was forced to concede that there would be a legal guarantee for a Minimum Support Prices, the cases against the farmers to curb the protests would be withdrawn, and a commitment to loan waiver.

In the last three years since the government was forced to withdraw the three farm laws, the government has not moved an inch to fulfill any of its promises. As always, the government's promises proved hollow. After three years of waiting, the farmers are back to protest, and a familiar sight has emerged in Delhi. A massive barricade with large police deployment has been placed on the Singhu border where the farmers have been gathering for the protest.

The police have resorted to the same brutal tactics as the last protest, arming themselves with drones, tear gas weapons, and military grade sonic weapons, some of which have been developed in Israel. Pellets have been used this

time as well, to deadly effect, already police repression has claimed the life of a farmer, who succumbed to injuries from a rubber bullet, while several others have suffered injuries from pellets.



Farmer's tractor rally in 2021

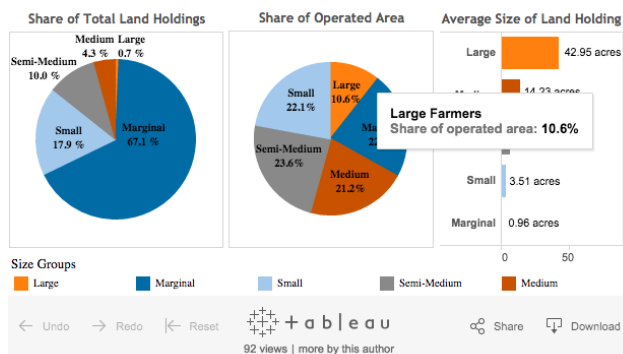
Rather than attempt to negotiate with the protesting farmers, the government prefers to suppress them. They have barricaded the connecting highways with layers of concrete and barbed wire, causing immense hardship to workers travelling to and from Delhi, all in the effort to prevent the farmers from entering the city to protest, an act which is their constitutionally guaranteed right. In the eight days of protest, the government has managed to cause one fatality. The violence has made the leadership of the protest postpone their planned march to Delhi by a further two days.

The timing of the protests is critical as India is approaching the time of national elections, which will be held sometime this summer. The BJP has momentum behind it, having won three key North and Central Indian states, the institutions of government have been fully cowed and brought under its control, its funding more than all the other major parties combined, and its most powerful rivals declining or stagnating in popularity. At a time when Modi has been trying to show himself as a strong leader for the Hindutva cause, the protest of the farmers comes as a reality check.

The government is losing the propaganda battle, trying in vain to divide the unity of the protesting farmers and isolating them from popular support, using the ploy of 'khalistan'. The tactic of the government has been to resurrect the bogey of a mostly dead reactionary religious movement for a separate Sikh homeland, to attack activists and Sikh farmers from the Punjab. This has failed to dissuade most of the farmers of India who support or at least sympathize with the protests at Delhi, it has only really worked to incite and direct the reactionary lumpen cadre of the BJP to see every Sikh as a potential 'khalistani' militant.

Strengths and weaknesses of the farmer's movement :

Landholding Statistics (2010-11)



5% of India's farmers hold 32% of land as per a 2010 survey

Mass mobilizations like these never fit squarely into simple black and white ideas, they are complex dialectical events which require careful scientific analysis to better understand them. While appreciating the gains of the farmer's movement, we must also be critical of its shortcomings, and have a realistic appraisal of its strengths.

Just as in 2020, the two greatest strengths of the farmer's movement had showed itself on the ground. The incredibly disciplined organization of the farmers, which prevented tactics of division working, and which helped the farmers face off against the government's arrogant and repressive tactics. The second strength is more obvious, the size and intensity of the

mobilization, this is a direct result of it being able to draw on the millions of rural masses, both peasant and agricultural proletariat.

The third strength which is not as obvious on the surface, is the commitment to political independence. The farmers have maintained their distance and prevented any of the failed mainstream parties from gaining leadership position. This speaks to a level of political understanding and consciousness among the protesting farmers. It is equally impressive that the farmers have been able to challenge the reactionary appeal of religious leadership, and kept reactionary forces within their movement to the fringes. This is in stark contrast to the anti-corruption mobilizations in 2012 where reactionary pro-hindutva elements had full freedom of operation.

These strengths combined ensured the farmer's protest would have the momentum, discipline and organization to fight against the Modi government, which seemed committed to break the farmer's protest. With the elections around the corner, the government's response is no less ruthless than it was in 2020. The police have been armed with tear gas, military grade weapons, and layers of barricades and barbed wires. Already, a young protester has died from police firing, but the protest has not broken. The discipline and organization which helped them withstand repression in 2020 remains with the movement in this protest.

While these strengths remain, as do many of the old weaknesses. This becomes clear by the simple fact, that the farmers are once again having to protest. As we had written in 2020 :

“The pressing questions of land reform, landlessness in India, and disparity of land ownership remain unanswered by this agitation, nor did the leftist parties raise this question, either in propaganda or in their own parallel movements. The focus of the agitations has remained locked in negotiating better prices and conditions of trade. The market is never questioned, nor is the capitalist system as a whole ever questioned.”

This is as true now as it was then, and is a consequence of the leadership of the movement, which seeks to override any class antagonism between large land owning farmers and farm workers, or marginal farmers. The leadership of the movement remains in the hands of large farmers in North India, particularly the Punjab. Participation from farmers in other states, and parallel mobilizations to the one in Delhi are limited.

Limited demands may help in focussing the energy of the masses, and gather the masses around the most immediate pressing issues, but it also allows space for capitalist governments to manoeuvre and negotiate. Ultimately, it provides them with a lifeline to regroup and exhaust the energy of the mobilization.

In three years, the Modi government did not fulfill any other promises it made at the time of withdrawing the three farm laws, and these were demands for the bare minimum requirements of the farmers at a time of severe agrarian crisis. The strategy of exhaustion and concessions, in preparation for eventually dominating through violence, was crafted by the Congress Party, and used to deadly effect by the BJP today.

The farmer's agitation has shown revolutionary potential, in so far as it's ability to mobilize in a disciplined and organized manner, but neither in it's leadership, nor in it's demands, nor in it's character is it revolutionary. In this, is it's biggest weakness.



Armed women peasant's militias in Telengana during the Telengana revolt of 1946

Towards a transitional programme for agriculture in India :

Despite decades of intense proletarianization, increasing urbanization, and the re-emergence of India as an industrial power, India remains for the most part, an agrarian society. Most of the population is still rural, and nearly half the workforce is dependent on agriculture. We must face this reality in crafting any revolutionary strategy for India.

This means we must deal with the questions facing the crisis of Indian agriculture. At it's core, this is a crisis caused by India's capitalist system, exacerbated by the liberalization of food trade, and the concentration of land ownership. There are numerous monopolies formed in agricultural trade, and large agro retail corporations like Reliance Fresh and the Adani group has emerged in recent years to worsen the situation. Large land owning farmers, corporate farmers, and multi national agro companies have been able to expand and entrench their monopolies, pushing marginal farmers to the brink.

Successive governments have done everything in their power to ensure the continuation of these policies, causing tens of thousands of recorded farmer suicides in the country. Farmers have fallen into debt traps, taken their own lives than live in the shame of poverty and lose their livelihoods. The destruction of lives and livelihoods of rural India, feed into the machinery of Indian capitalism, supplying an ever growing number of low wage labour, and the reserve army of labour. Simply granting a minimum support price, or regulating the trade in commodities with APMCs, will not be enough to stop this, even if it brings some momentary relief.

What is needed instead, is a programme for sweeping revolutionary change in agriculture, the likes of which has been laying dormant and forgotten by every mainstream party, including the Stalinist left, which used to at least demand land reform.

The core of the agrarian question, is the question of land ! The scattered, informal and

marginalized nature of Indian farm lands puts each farmer on a weak footing, while corporations and large landed farmers can take advantage of better logistics, political support and market access. To say the field is uneven is an understatement ! There can be no agrarian programme for India without fulfilling the primary demand of the bourgeois democratic revolution in India, **of comprehensive nationwide Land Reforms !**

Thus far, land reforms in India have been done in an ad hoc manner in most states, with only Maharashtra, West Bengal and Kerala having implemented large scale comprehensive land reform programmes. The goal must be to make this nation-wide. Ensuring every rural agricultural household has a viable land holding for farming, and the elimination of landlessness must be key in revolutionary strategy.

Combined with this, is the absolute necessity of **eliminating rural agricultural debt**. Those who control the trade in agriculture, also control much of the agrarian finance, throwing farmers in debt traps, which eventually become death traps. The farmer is doubly exploited, often by the same entity, at first squeezed out by agrarian traders, and in the second instance squeezed out by debt. Our goal must be to end this system, not reform it ! **The nationalization of food trade, with democratically managed procurement committees must replace trade monopolies.**

Alongside the nationalization of trade, we must forgive all farmer debt ! Predatory loans must be replaced with interest free loans with flexible payment schemes, managed by state owned banks. In this, solidarity between bank workers and farmers are key, the liberalizing of banking and increase share of exploitative private financiers has been devastating for

farmers and the poor. It is they who must be squeezed out by nationalized banking!

Ultimately, we must lay down the basis for a more sustainable, efficient and democratically managed agriculture. The foundation of this must be **the nationalization of large estates, corporate farms, and plantations !**

Our support is unconditional but not uncritical :

The farmer's protest shows the potential of the mobilized Indian rural masses. The energy and power unleashed is enough to cow down the reactionary government of Modi. The power harnessed by the numeric power of rural masses, organized in a disciplined manner, united behind clear goals. What is lacking, is a programme for the future, and a long term revolutionary strategy. Here, we differ most sharply from the leadership of the farmer's struggle.

Our support to the movement is based on the principled position of opposing the capitalist exploitation of Indian agriculture. The exploitation which has destroyed hundreds and thousands of lives, and enriched corporations at the expense of farmers. In this, we make common cause with the farmers when they attack the Modi government.

ALL OUT SUPPORT TO THE FARMERS !

WAIVE THE LOANS !

DROP THE CRIMINAL CASES AGAINST FARMERS !

DOWN WITH MODI !

DOWN WITH THE POLICE !

On the agitation in Sandeshkhali



The uprising in Sandeshkhali

Since the last week the people of a small village in West Bengal's Sundarbans have been in revolt against the misrule of two politically linked gangsters. The revolt strikes at the core the TMC's power structure. The protests have caught the attention of every bourgeois and Stalinist political party, who seek to opportunistically take advantage of what is turning out to be, one of the most significant rural uprisings since the agitation at Nandigram and Singur.

The local government has responded to this agitation with repression and blackmail, it's usual tactics. For the Chief Minister Mamta Bannerji, this is a far cry from her days leading the agitation at Singur where she was leading the peasants in their struggle against forcible land acquisition for the benefit of industry. Now, she is using force to aid the exploitation of a largely population at the hands of gangsters.

Brief background :

For the first three decades after independence, the politics of West Bengal was dominated by the Congress party, with a powerful left opposition being it's main counter. Between 1978 (the first election after the emergency), and 2011, the state was ruled by the left front government led by the CPI(M). Despite the communist label, the CPI(M) championed capitalist development, albeit with welfarist measures. While pursuing welfare policies, it also incorporated some of the most corrupt capitalistic elements into it's governance, including the use of local gangsters and freely collaborating with capitalists, especially in the sphere of real estate development. This was the context in which the current ruling party the Trinamool Congress (TMC) emerged.

The TMC started it's life as a break away faction of the Congress Party, the same as the NCP (Nationalist Congress Party) in Maharashtra. The TMC had drawn right wing members of the Congress party, who were both corrupt and opportunistic. In the crisis period of the party during the decade of the 90s, when the Congress system of rule imploded and the first BJP government was established (in 1998), the party

underwent fracturing with many different offshoots emerging in parts of India.

These offshoots had all the qualities of their mother party, and often times were worse. One can see this in the TMC's style of functioning, where one bonapartist figure presides over the party in the form of Mamata Bannerjee, while the party attempts to stand above class contradictions. The TMC presents a populist image, engaging in welfarist policies like the subsidized rice scheme, or the 'kanyashree' scheme for providing free transport to rural female students, while being the clear tool of the leading capitalist class of the state.

The TMC was the implacable enemy of the Stalinist CPIM led left front government. It presented a right wing bourgeois centrist alternative to the rule of the Stalinists, drawing on sections of the land owning bourgeoisie and petty bourgeois, particularly those who lost out from the left front government's land reforms. For most of its early years, the party struggled against the Stalinist juggernaut whose rule in West Bengal seemed unshakeable. That changed in 2006 when the Singur and Nandigram agitation began.

It was a culmination of the CPIM's policy of talking for the workers, but acting for the capitalists, when the left front government began forcibly acquiring land for the benefit of big industrial corporations. Land in Singur was to be acquired for the setting up of an auto manufacturing plant of the Tatas, and land in Nandigram was to be acquired for the setting up of a chemical plant by the Indonesian multi national Salim group. 14 people were shot in cold blood by the police to curb the agitation, but the farmers won and both projects were scrapped.

The victory catapulted the TMC to national recognition, and entrenched the party as the alternative to the CPIM, which had ruled unbroken since 1978. The TMC would win the 2011 state elections, amid widespread violence and mass murder. The CPI(M) claims up to two hundred of its cadres were murdered by the

TMC across the country in the run up to the elections and in its immediate aftermath. This was only the beginning for the TMC, as the party grew in power at the expense of the CPIM.

The TMC's misrule :



Political violence and intimidation is a regular feature in rural elections in West Bengal

The use of thugs to enforce political power was not new in Bengal, finding its roots in the days of the Raj, when gangsters were hired as strike breakers, or enforcers of strike. It became endemic after independence, when the Congress party relied on lumpen elements to fight Communists in the decade of the 60s and 70s. During the Naxalite era from the late sixties onwards, both the Stalinists and the Congress freely used lumpens to conduct violence against leftists and in particular against naxalite agitators.

The lumpen elements in parties grew in power over time. After winning the 1978 elections, the CPIM relied on the use of gangsters and lumpen cadres to enforce its power violently. In time, they enriched themselves as a new lumpen bourgeoisie. This was the very layer that switched en masse over to the TMC once they had won the 2011 state elections. The political leadership of the TMC have institutionalized corruption to enrich themselves, undermining the state's bureaucracy, to their own benefit, or the benefit of their real estate business partners.

The first five years of the TMC was one of chaos and violence, as they consolidated power, using murder and intimidation as their main tools of power. The worst scenes of violence were not in

the cities, but in the countryside, which saw the full brunt of terror from the TMC and its goons. With political power consolidated, the TMC would next focus on enrichment, corruption and scams were the order of the day.

The first major scam was the chit fund scam, which involved a massive ponzi scheme done with the full backing and patronage of TMC leaders between 2010 and 2013. Up to 20 million people were affected by it, some lost their entire life savings. Then came the scam in ration supplies, scam involving government jobs, and education. Parallel to this, is the corruption involved in real estate which has yet to be exposed or seriously investigated.



Protest against chit fund scam, many had died by suicide when their life savings were wasted in the ponzi scheme

Despite these scams, the widespread violence, the TMC managed to win the 2016 state elections decisively, and again in 2019 with an even greater margin. While the victory in 2019 can be explained by a combination of fear and hostility from the state's sizeable muslim minority, and the inability of the BJP to appeal to the majority of bengali hindus with a reactionary agenda. The victory in 2016 was largely the result of disorganization and demoralization suffered by the main opposition party, which was the ruling party until 2011, the CPI(M) and the left front. The strength of the TMC owes as much to the failure of Stalinist policies in the state over 34 years, as it does to the TMC's own political machinations, and the support from the bourgeois press, and the Congress.

With the complete wipe out of the CPIM in the 2019 state elections, it can be concluded that their organizational machinery in the state has all but broken down. The main opposition in West Bengal today, is the BJP, which is the ruling party at the center. Bankrolled by the largest capitalists of India, supported by a large section of the local bourgeoisie, and capable of mobilizing a massive cadre force, it is a much more potent enemy for the TMC.

Among the numerous weapons in the arsenal of the BJP, is the use of state institutions, chiefly investigative agencies like the Enforcement Directorate (ED) and Central Bureau of Investigation (CBI). These are the agencies that have been investigating into the scam in ration distribution, in which an arrest has already been made with MLA Jyotipriya Mullick taken into custody. Raids were conducted throughout the state at several locations. As the national elections nears, the investigative raids are likely to continue.

One such raid against a local strongman, linked with the MLA Jyotipriya Mullick, is what began all the troubles in a little known village by the Sunderbans, Sandeshkhali.

The Sandeshkhali agitation :

Shahjahan Sheikh would not have been well known outside of his immediate constituency, were it not for the events that have unfolded over this month around the scam in ration distribution. Shahjahan Sheikh was previously a strongman under the CPIM led left front government. On paper he was nothing but a mere poultry farmer, in practice he was practically a gangster.

There was nothing unique about Shahjahan Sheik, being one of the many strongmen lumpen leaders that were fostered during the reign of the CPIM. There were and are many like him still in a position of power in West Bengal, only now they side with the current ruling party, the TMC and have been given far greater freedom to operate, loot and enrich themselves.

On the 5th of January, the Enforcement Directorate arrived at Sandeshkhali to

investigate the scam in ration distribution, under which they had arrested alleged ring leader the MLA Jyotipriya Mullick. The local leader Shahjahan Sheikh was a part of this wider circle of scam. As soon as they arrived, Sheikh's supporters agitated and injured one of the agents. This apparent show of popularity would prove to be illusory, as the days passed. Shahjahan Sheikh managed to escape from his town, and is believed to be absconding in Bangladesh.

While he was away, Sandeshkhali began to boil. For long the villagers of Sandeshkhali who had suffered under the terror of Shahjahan Sheikh and his associates took to protesting. They turned their ire on two of his henchmen. Stories emerged of land grabbing, extortion, and sexual violence. With the full protection of the state government machinery, Shahjahan Sheikh had been running his little fiefdom over Sandeshkhali, subjecting the largely dalit population of the region to years of terror and exploitation.

Today, the villagers, and especially the women are out protesting against this misrule. They have organized, taken arms, and are beating back the thugs of Shahjahan Sheikh and his henchmen. It is nothing short of a rebellion against the TMCs misrule.

The opposition strategy :



Local BJP leader, and former TMC leader, Suwendu Adhikari leading a BJP rally in solidarity with Sandeshkhali

There is nothing new about popular mass mobilizations being hijacked by reactionary leadership. Under capitalism, reactionary forces will always have more resources and opportunity

to organize with. The BJP being the main opposition in the state of West Bengal, can count on support from the rest of the national bourgeoisie, the organizational power of the RSS. They have been in the lead leading protests in solidarity with the people of Sandeshkhali, despite having little to no presence in the protests happening in the district.

The left are also active, but large scale solidarity protests by the CPIM and other left front parties came late in coming. The fact that they are able to organize such protests suggests, the party may have rebuild some of their shattered organization, and can still count on many supporters within the state, particularly among it's youth and students union wing. However, it is clear that they are no longer the force they once were, and neither does it appear that the left are in the leadership of the agitation. Their national strategy of largely tailing the Congress party with the sole aim of pushing aside or weakening the BJP prevents them from attempting to seize leadership.

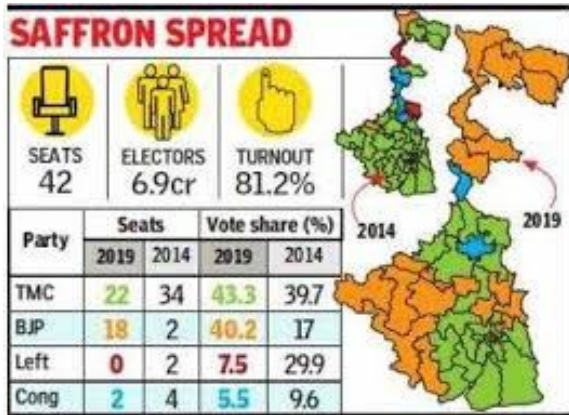
The BJP is poised to take the greatest political benefit from these protests, with the BJP backed governor (akin to a head of state but at the state level), weighing in against the TMC. The investigative agencies, the election commission, and central police force, are all under the control of the BJP at the center, and grant them enormous power to influence politics locally. Add to this, their toxic but influential social media and mass media presence, means that they have been trying hard to communalize the conflict. For the BJP, the core problem in Sandeshkhali is not necessarily the exploitation of the villagers, but an alleged 'genocide of hindus'. Specifically, they have attempted to spin the mass sexual violence against women, as an act targeting Hindu women, never mind that two of Shahjahan Sheikh's key aides were Hindu, as are many of his henchmen.

Years of propaganda are beginning to have their effect among the majority of Bengali hindus now, with the only defense available to minorities coming in the form of corrupt bourgeois parties like the TMC which pay lip

service to secularism to shepherd the minorities into voting for it.

Neither TMC nor BJP :

The people of West Bengal deserve better than having to choose between two evils. The TMC does not discriminate on the basis of religion, they will exploit hindus and muslims equally. The BJP however, will exploit and attack religious minorities with greater intensity, and by pitting communities against each other, open the ground for greater exploitation. Both are paths to ruin.



The BJP has a 40% vote share in the last national elections from West Bengal while the TMC has 43%

The prospects of the next state elections in 2026 and the national elections later this year, are bleak. Reactionary forces in india are ascendant, and have been so since 2011 when the TMC gained power in the state. In such a scenario, neither the bankrupt bourgeois parties, nor the bankrupt Stalinist leadership offers any real alternatives to the people.

The need of the day, is to build a revolutionary party, and to build it among the masses.

Israel on Trial at the International Court of Justice

- By Fabio Bosco



After being condemned in the streets around the world, it is now the turn of the Hague Tribunal to put the racist state of Israel on trial. At the request of the South African government, the International Court of Justice, known as the Hague Tribunal, began hearings on January 12 .

On that day, the South African jurists, backed by the moral weight of those who fought for decades against the apartheid regime in their country, didactically exposed the ongoing genocide in Gaza, with thousands of dead and wounded, the destruction of a large number of buildings, including houses, schools, and hospitals. To demonstrate the deliberateness with which Israel has unleashed violence, they pointed to the 17-year siege of Gaza, with restricted access to food, drinking water, electricity, and fuel, and also included several racist statements by Israeli cabinet ministers advocating the expulsion of Palestinians.

On the following day, the representatives of Israel argued that there is no intention to totally or partially annihilate the Palestinians, despite the cutting-off of water and electricity, the restrictions on access to food, medicine, and fuel, and the public statements of its rulers and governors.

The Hague Court is expected to take years to reach a verdict, but could issue an interim ruling in a few weeks calling for a cease-fire. The state of Israel never complies with any U.N. decision that is not in its interests, counting on the U.S. veto and also on the connivance of the five permanent members of the Security Council who are its allies, to prevent any resolution against the Zionist state

Several countries have declared their support for South Africa's request, the most important being Brazil. President Lula met with the Palestinian ambassador on January 11 and issued a report on the meeting. In this report, he announced Brazil's support for the South African request, but at the same time he equated the resistance actions of Hamas, which he described as "terrorist," with the Israeli genocide.

Moreover, Lula demanded that Hamas release Israelis imprisoned in Gaza, but said nothing about releasing the tens of thousands of Palestinian political prisoners, including a Brazilian named Islam Hamed, who has been held in Israeli prisons known for human rights violations.

Blinken in the Middle East

U.S. Secretary of State Antony Blinken traveled to the Middle East for the fourth time in three months on January 5. For six days he met with government officials from Turkey, Jordan, Qatar, the United Arab Emirates, Saudi Arabia, the Palestinian Authority, Israel, Bahrain and Egypt.

His goal was to rescue the State of Israel in the midst of a brutal political, social, and economic crisis, as well as the badly damaged image of the Biden administration for its unconditional support of Israeli genocide in Gaza.

A day earlier, on January 4, Israeli Defense Minister Yoav Gallant held a press conference to present his proposals for the future of Gaza.

Of course, he omitted the main Israeli proposal: the expulsion of Palestinians from Gaza. The Israeli government has been negotiating with African countries such as Ethiopia and the Democratic Republic of Congo to “host” the expelled Palestinians. This proposal was publicly defended by several ministers, not only by Zionists Itamar Ben-Gvir and Bezalel Smotrich, but also by Intelligence Minister Gila Gamliel of the Likud party, as well as in leaked official documents.

Gallant argued for the continuation of the 17-year siege of Gaza; the free movement of Israeli

troops within the region, as in the West Bank; a definitive solution to prevent any transit of goods across the Gaza-Egypt border via tunnels or other means, to be implemented jointly by Israel, Egypt and the United States; and the formation of a multinational task force for the “rehabilitation” of Gaza, composed of the United States, European and Arab governments (in practice, this means paying for the reconstruction of Gaza under Israeli leadership). To administer Palestinian towns and villages besieged by Israeli forces, he advocated local civilian committees formed by Israeli-appointed Palestinians with no connection to the Ramallah-based Palestinian Authority.

Arab leaders, under pressure from their people, rejected Gallant’s proposal for a multinational task force and confined themselves to asking Blinken for an immediate cease-fire and a lasting solution to the Palestinian question, i.e. a clear path to the formation of a Palestinian mini-state based in the West Bank and Gaza. Saudi Prince Mohammed bin Salman took the opportunity to add some more specific demands: a U.S.-Saudi mutual defense treaty, U.S. cooperation on a Saudi nuclear program, and the sale of more advanced weapons.

Thus, Blinken formulated the U.S. proposal: an end to the war in Gaza and a path to a

Palestinian mini-state in the West Bank and Gaza under the command of the Palestinian Authority, in exchange for full normalization of relations with Israel and Arab funding for the reconstruction of Gaza. As first steps, Israel was to reduce attacks, release frozen PA funds, and accept the return of the Palestinian population to northern Gaza.

But the State of Israel did not agree to this plan. Netanyahu only agreed to issue a note on January 12 stating that the State of Israel did not plan to expel the Palestinians (which also helped him face accusations at the Hague Tribunal) and that a U.N. delegation would visit northern Gaza.

Military Strikes on Yemen

The United States has formed a coalition of countries to attack Yemen’s Houthis (the de facto government in key areas of the country) and reopen shipping lanes in the Red Sea. The Houthis carried out dozens of attacks on Israeli-bound ships in solidarity with Gaza, and they eventually restricted all shipping in the area,

which accounts for 12% of world trade. Before launching the attacks, the United States and its allies voted in the U.N. Security Council to authorize bombing the Houthis. Russia and China abstained and did not veto the resolution, paving the way for U.S. and British military action. On January 12, the U.S. coalition struck some 70 targets and continued their attacks over the next few days. Despite the attacks, the Houthis vowed to continue solidarity actions with the Palestinians.

World Day of Solidarity

A global day of solidarity with Palestine was held on January 13. Dozens of demonstrations involving thousands of people were held around the world. These actions are essential because, together with the Palestinian resistance in occupied Palestine, they are the main instruments to stop the genocide and achieve the end of the siege of Gaza, which would be a defeat for the state of Israel and a step towards its dismantling.

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