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## *Trump hails Modi as his supporters engulf Delhi in communal violence*

US President Donald Trump lionized Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi at a rally in Ahmedabad Monday, and continued to lavish praise on this “exceptional leader... who works night and day for his country” during the remainder of his 36-hour India visit.



**U.S. President Donald Trump speaks with Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi Tuesday, Feb. 25, 2020, in New Delhi, India. (AP Photo/Alex Brandon)**

Even as Trump did so, the vile consequences of the fascistic, Hindu supremacist policies pursued by Modi and his Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) government were being bloodily spelled out on the streets of India’s capital city, Delhi.

At the instigation of local BJP leaders, mobs of Hindu chauvinists chanting “Jai Shri Ram” and “Long Live the (Hindu God) Ram” ran amok in northeast Delhi on Monday and Tuesday. They attacked Muslims and vandalized and torched Muslim-owned businesses.

“In embattled neighbourhood after neighbourhood in northeast Delhi,” said the *Indian Express*, “one story played through Tuesday from morning to midnight—groups of young men armed with sticks and rods looking for a fight, setting shops and homes owned by Muslims on fire. All right under the nose of the police who either stood as silent spectators, looked the other way or were plain missing when they were most needed.”

As of Tuesday evening, 13 people had died in the communal violence, including a senior Delhi police officer, and scores had been hospitalized.

Local leaders of the BJP and RSS, the shadowy Hindu supremacist organization that has long served as the BJP’s ideological mentor, are directly culpable for the communal violence now convulsing Delhi. For weeks they have been inciting violence against those protesting against the BJP government’s anti-Muslim Citizenship Amendment Act (CAA). This has included lauding the lethal violence that the BJP state government in neighbouring Uttar Pradesh has used to suppress anti-CAA protests, as well as leading their supporters in chants of “shoot them down.”

On Sunday, BJP leader Kapil Mishra mobilized a pro-CAA counterprotest in northeast Delhi and announced he was giving the Delhi police an “ultimatum”—if they did not clear the capital’s streets of all anti-CAA protesters within the next three days, he and his supporters would do it. Violent clashes soon followed.

But Mishra is only a petty thug. It is Trump’s “true friend” Modi and his BJP government who are politically responsible—and, by all rights, the true authors—for the atrocities now being visited upon Delhi’s Muslim population.

Amid a sharp economic slowdown (India’s unemployment rate recently reached a 45-year high) and a wave of worker protests and strikes, Modi and his BJP are relentlessly stoking Hindu communalism. Their aim is three-fold: to mobilize their Hindu supremacist supporters as shock troops against mounting social opposition; to divert growing popular anger and frustration behind reaction; and to split the working class.

In August, the Modi government illegally stripped Jammu and Kashmir, India’s lone Muslim state, of its semi-autonomous status, and ever since the region has been subject to repression tantamount to a stage of siege.

Bowing to a violent decadeslong campaign mounted by the BJP and its right-wing Hindu allies, India's Supreme Court recently directed the Modi government to build a temple to the Hindu god Lord Ram on the site where the 16th century *Babri Masjid* (mosque) stood until Hindu communalists tore it to the ground in 1992, at the instigation of top BJP leaders.

The anti-Muslim CAA, which was rushed through parliament last December, makes religion a criterion for determining citizenship for the first time ever in nominally secular India. Moreover, it establishes a legal mechanism for harassing, bullying and ostracizing poor Muslims in the name of ferreting out "illegal immigrants."

However, to the shock of Modi and his government, the CAA has been met with nationwide mass protests that have united Indian workers, students and professionals across all religious-sectarian, caste and ethno-linguistic divides.

The greatest fear of the BJP government and the Indian ruling class is that the mass opposition to the CAA will intersect with and come under the leadership of an insurgent working class. Such a development has already been foreshadowed by last January's one-day general strike, which saw tens of millions of workers across India walk off the job to protest the BJP's austerity measures, pro-investor "reforms" and its anti-Muslim CAA.

At a press conference in Delhi at the conclusion of his trip and even as significant portions of India's capital continued to be convulsed by violence, Trump sprang to Modi's defence. The US president, whose own anti-Muslim bigotry has found official expression in US travel bans on residents from half a dozen predominantly Muslim countries, praised Modi as a votary of religious tolerance. "The prime minister said he wants people to have religious freedom," Trump declared. "They have worked really hard on it."

Trump, as always, does it more crudely and brazenly. But if truth be told, the US political establishment, Democratic and Republican alike, the Pentagon and the media all celebrate the Modi-led BJP government as a crucial ally, and have conspicuously ignored, covered over and downplayed its manifold crimes.

This is because US imperialism considers India as pivotal to its reckless military-strategic offensive against China. Not only does nuclear-armed India have the world's fourth largest military budget and share a long-disputed border with China, geographically it commands the Indian Ocean sea lanes that convey much of the oil that fuels China's economy and serve as the principal conduit for its exports to Europe, Africa and the Middle East.

Under Modi, India has been transformed into a frontline state in Washington's anti-China war drive. New Delhi has thrown open its ports and bases to US warships and warplanes, parroted the US stand on the South China Sea dispute, and expanded bilateral and trilateral cooperation with Washington principal's Asia Pacific allies, Japan and Australia.

At yesterday's press conference Trump enthused over how he and Modi are "revitalizing the Quad Initiative"—that is, forging a NATO-style, anti-China alliance uniting India, Japan and Australia under US leadership.

That said, there is no doubt that the fascistic billionaire, "America First" anti-immigrant US president feels genuine political affinity with the Hindu supremacist autocrat Modi.

This points to vital political issues that go beyond the incendiary geostrategic aims of Trump's visit to India and have been highlighted by the past two days' communal outrages in Delhi.

Everywhere, crisis-ridden capitalist elites are promoting ultraright, communalist and fascist forces with the aim of intimidating, diverting and splitting the working class.

- In Germany, powerful elements in the national security apparatus and the political establishment have conspired to transform the far-right AfD into the official opposition in the national parliament.
- In France, President Emmanuel Macron has moved to rehabilitate the Nazi collaborator Marshal Pétain as he uses police violence and newly "normalized" emergency law measures to impose sweeping social cuts.
- Sri Lankan President Gotabaya Rajapakse, who played a key role in directing the final stages of the Sinhalese's elite's thirty-year anti-Tamil war, is inciting Buddhist supremacism with the aim of derailing mounting opposition to sweeping IMF-dictated austerity measures.

The wave of strikes and mass anti-government protests that has swept the globe since 2018 has demonstrated that when the working class moves, it does so as a class, uniting workers across all racial, ethnic, communal and gender lines.

This is as true of India, as it is of the United States.

But the objective unity of the working class must be politically leavened by a socialist internationalist program that illuminates the common class interests of workers around the world and politically underpins the fight to fuse their struggles into a global offensive against capitalism.

This requires an implacable struggle against the nationalist, communalist, racist right and far-right. But it is also a fight against the economic nationalist program of the trade union bureaucracy and against all purveyors of racial, gender and other forms of upper-middle class identity politics. The latter seek the redistribution of wealth among the top 10 percent. They are vehemently hostile to the class unity of working people in the fight for social equality and against imperialist war because they recognize it to be a threat to their own privileges.

With workers around the world united by the process of global production and able to coordinate their struggles through modern telecommunications, conditions have never been more propitious for realizing the watchword of the Communist Manifesto: “Workers of the World Unite.”

But to do so, the furious resistance of a putrid social order that is vomiting up reaction—whether in the form of far-right nationalism, racism and communalism, or poisonous pseudoleft identity politics—must be overcome through the political education and mobilization of the working class. It is to this task that the *World Socialist Web Site*, the International Committee of the Fourth International and its constituent Socialist Equality Parties are dedicated.

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