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By Calvin Deutschbein
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Solidarity with Kashmir!

Parts of this statement were presented at a March 1 rally in Durham, N.C.

Workers World Party is here today with you all to build a movement to counter racism, Islamophobia, inequality and other forms of oppression at home and to connect to liberation movements globally from Palestine to Kashmir. Workers World Party has always recognized the right of the people of Kashmir to self-determination. WWP considers Kashmir to be an oppressed nation under the rule of India — which is itself oppressed by world imperialism.



“No to Fascism in India; No to Racism at Home” rally in Durham’s CCB Plaza on March 1.

Kashmir’s population is about 14 million people. Two-thirds of its population are Muslims, making it India’s largest Muslim-majority state. Two-thirds of the valley is in

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India, about one-third in Pakistan, and a very small piece is in China. Kashmir has been a region of deep dispute between India and Pakistan since 1947, when both countries gained independence from British colonial domination. India and Pakistan have fought four wars over the status of Kashmir. Following the revocation of Kashmiri sovereignty in August 2019, Prime Minister Modi and the right-wing Indian Hindu nationalist party BJP have escalated attacks against the Kashmiri people and Muslims and other oppressed people throughout India.

In what bears striking similarity, to us in the U.S., to the actions of Trump and U.S. white nationalists, Modi uses religious differences as well as colonial divisions like race, gender, sexual orientation and class to incite violence. Both regimes use their borders — either India-Pakistan or Mexico-U.S. — as battlegrounds in the Islamophobic conception of “war and terror.” They continue the practice of British colonial rule: “Divide and conquer” tactics have left a legacy of national, and especially religious, animosity among all the peoples of the Indian subcontinent and within the settler-colonialist U.S.

At this time, Modi and his BJP party have a close alliance with U.S. imperialism. This makes it all the more clear that we need a movement at home in solidarity with liberation movements globally.

British colonialism, U.S. imperialism, Islamophobia and Hindu nationalists all sought to divide people by religious groups, castes, languages spoken and nationalities, so that the workers under oppressive rule would not unite to threaten empire. And the cost to workers is immense: The British partition of India alone led to the displacement of between 14 million and 16 million people and the killing of more than 200,000 to 2 million people in mass riots; and it left a territorial dispute in Kashmir that has led to persistent atrocities to this day.

On Aug. 5 2019, BJP, under Modi’s leadership, revoked Article 370, which had given Kashmiris the right to own land. Modi’s action was meant to encourage millions of Hindus to move into the majority-Muslim territory of Kashmir. We cannot ignore the parallels between these actions and settler colonialism against majority Muslim territory in Palestine and against Indigenous peoples in what is now called the U.S.

This blatant bigotry, on display during the U.S. president's visit to India, unites Modi and Trump.

Kashmir is a heavily militarized zone, with some 600,000 Indian soldiers and paramilitary cops stationed in the territory. They act as an army of occupation against Kashmir. More than 10,000 men have been arrested, and more than 10,000 women have faced sexual violence from the occupying force. India has cut off all communication, including internet, phones and social media. Schools and markets are closed, and millions of people are left isolated and besieged. Police have opened fire on protest demonstrations in the capital, Srinagar, and other towns and cities. The population is under complete curfew, unable even to go outside. In the face of these challenges, Kashmiris have not backed down and have been fighting back, as they have done for the last 72 years.

The situation in all of India is becoming increasingly violent every day. The state is targeting Muslims and other minorities and torturing them in concentration camps. Hindu nationalists vigilantes are attacking Muslims at their homes, businesses and places of worship. Modi and the BJP won't stop until India becomes an ethnonationalist state — or until a united working-class movement stops them. And the movement against them is powerful and growing!

Just under two months ago, approximately 200 million workers participated in the two-day All-India General Strike Jan. 8-9. One in six people in the world live in India, and at a bare minimum more than one in nine people in India took part in the strike — or about one striker for every 50 people in the entire world!

Although generally ignored by the Western capitalist news media, this was a world-shaking event and the largest general strike in world labor history.

Everywhere that national chauvinism, colonialism, imperialism or anything else attacks and attempts to divide the working class, workers come together powerfully to resist. We know that the best way to fight division, to fight hate, to fight Islamophobia is through solidarity. Through solidarity we can build a movement to counter racism, Islamophobia, inequality and other forms of oppression at home and to connect to liberation movements globally.

From Kashmir to Palestine, occupation is a crime!

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