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European Languages

زبانهای اروپایی

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25.01.2024

The Indian ruling class and imperialist powers embrace Modi as he erects a Hindu supremacist state



An Indian Air Force helicopter showers flower petals during the opening of a temple dedicated to Hinduism's Lord Ram in Ayodhya, India on January 22, 2024. [AP Photo/Rajesh Kumar Singh]

India's Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) government staged a massive spectacle Monday to consecrate a newly-erected Hindu temple on the site where the renowned *Babri Masjid* mosque stood for almost 500 years. The mosque was stormed and demolished by Hindu fundamentalist fanatics organized by the BJP and its fascistic allies in 1992.

Presided over by Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi, Monday's event was both the celebration of an historic crime and a major step toward realizing a far bigger one—the

transformation of India into a Hindu supremacist state where Muslims, Christians and other minorities will live in sufferance and only in so far as they acknowledge that India is first and foremost a “Hindu nation.”

The razing of the Babri Masjid on Dec. 6, 1992 was an atrocity that triggered the biggest wave of communal violence in India since the 1947 partition of the subcontinent into an expressly Muslim Pakistan and a predominantly Hindu India. Thousands perished in the partition, most of them poor Muslims.

Three decades later, the far-right BJP has become the Indian ruling elite’s preferred party of national government. If India’s billionaires have embraced Modi and the thugs that staff the BJP’s front benches it is precisely because of their readiness to run roughshod over democratic rights and constitutional safeguards in pursuing “pro-investor policies” and New Delhi’s great power ambitions.

Monday’s event was scripted down to the smallest detail—all with the aim of flouting the secular letter of India’s constitution, inciting Hindu chauvinism, promoting religious backwardness and irrationality, and giving the Hindu strongman Modi the imprimatur of the divine.

Modi presided at a ceremony in the temple’s inner sanctum that purported to “give life” to an idol of the baby Lord Ram—in reality a large doll—through an elaborate series of Hindu incantations and rituals.

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In a subsequent nationally televised address before thousands of dignitaries, Modi declared the temple’s consecration to be the “rebirth” of the “Hindu nation,” after centuries of “slavery” at the hands of the “Muslims” and the British Empire, and affirmed that the Hindu nation and India are one.

The declamations of Hindu national unity are, of course, a colossal fraud. India is riven by class conflict, with the top 1 percent of the population gorging on 22 percent of all income, while hundreds of millions survive on less than \$3 per day. When Modi proclaims the “rebirth” of a mythical Hindu nation, what he is in fact celebrating is the political pre-eminence of the BJP and its far right allies.

“This is not just a divine temple,” affirmed Modi. “It is a temple of India’s vision, philosophy, and direction ... Ram is the thought of India, the law of India ... the prestige of India, the might of India.”

Blessing this orgy of reaction were not only the head of the fascist RSS, who flanked Modi for much of the proceedings, but India’s billionaires. Led by Mukesh Amabani and Gautam Adani, respectively Asia’s richest and second richest persons, they came out in force to join the festivities and lend further lustre to what was the unofficial launch of Modi and the BJP’s campaign to win a third consecutive five-year term when India goes to the polls this spring. “Very, very privileged to witness the new age of India,” declared Ambani.

Sections of the Western media, including the *Guardian*, *Financial Times*, *New York Times* and *Japan Times*, have expressed concern at the “death of secular India.” These concerns are motivated first and foremost by fears that Modi could reap a whirlwind, endangering global capital’s investments, and that his relentless communal incitement exposes their fraudulent attempts to promote India as a “democratic” antipode to “totalitarian” China.

In any event, what the ruling class scribes write is one thing; the policies of their governments are another. For a decade, Modi was banned from entry to the US because of his role when chief minister of Gujarat in inciting and presiding over the 2002 Gujarat anti-Muslim pogrom. It left some 2,000 Muslims dead and hundreds of thousands homeless.

But since the BJP came to power in 2014, Washington, London, Berlin, Paris and Tokyo have all been aggressively courting and feting Modi, even as his government has presided over a never-ending litany of communalist outrages—from encouraging vigilante attacks on Muslim cow traders to passing a Citizenship Amendment Act to pave the way for the mass deportation of Muslim migrants.

They have done so because India is central to their plans to strategically encircle and wage war on China.

The imperialist powers’ embrace of Modi is at one with their full support for Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu and his far-right government as it mounts its genocidal assault on Gaza and their alliance with the fascist disciples of Stepan Bandera in waging war against Russia in Ukraine.

As throughout the world, there is mass opposition in India to the agenda of the far-right. Recent years have seen a wave of militant workers’ struggles and farmer protests that have

cut across the communal, caste, and ethnic divisions incited by the political representatives of the ruling class, demonstrating thereby the objective unity of the working class.

Globally, as in India, the working class runs up against the problem that the political parties and trade unions that claim to speak in its name uphold the capitalist order and systematically strangle its struggles, thereby opening the door for the far-right to exploit growing social anger and frustration. For decades, the twin Stalinist parliamentary parties—the Communist Party of India (Marxist) or CPM and the Communist Party of India (CPI)—and their Left Front and affiliated trade unions have harnessed the working class to the Congress Party, the Indian bourgeoisie’s traditional governing party, as well as a constellation of right-wing casteist and ethno-communal parties, in the name of fighting the fascist BJP.

Today, they point to the crimes of the BJP not to indict the Indian ruling class and summon the working class to struggle, but to try to corral it behind the Congress Party-led INDIA electoral alliance, which is no less committed than Modi’s BJP to “pro-investor” policies and the Indo-US “global strategic partnership.” Prominent among the members of this so-called “secular, democratic alliance” are parties that were longtime BJP allies and even proponents of Hindu supremacism like the Shiv Sena.

India’s workers and toilers cannot combat communal reaction by clutching the right-wing parties of the capitalist establishment and the putrefying “democratic” institutions of the Indian Republic. These parties and institutions, first and foremost the Congress Party itself, have connived with and adapted to the Hindu right, including in the partition of India, which enshrined communalism in the very state structures of South Asia. The Supreme Court has issued one judgment after another facilitating the BJP’s attacks on democratic rights, including a 2019 ruling, which Modi hailed in his Monday speech, which “ordered” the government to build the Ram Temple on the site of the razed Babri Masjid.

To defeat Hindu supremacism and communal reaction, India’s workers must base their struggles on the fight for socialism and the Trotskyist program of permanent revolution. They must unite all their struggles against privatization, precarious contract employment, austerity, communal provocations and other attacks on democratic rights into a mass working class political offensive. Such an offensive would need be oriented to the developing upsurge of the international working class and aimed at rallying the oppressed toilers in opposition to the bourgeoisie and all its political representatives and in the fight for workers’ power and the socialist reorganization of socioeconomic life.

World Socialist 24.01.2024