

## Self-Determination for Kashmir!

# Indian Troops Out of Kashmir Valley!

In a calculated escalation of a decades-long war on Kashmir, on August 5, the Hindu-chauvinist government of Narendra Modi, suddenly and without so much as a word to the Kashmiris, dissolved the local assembly and stripped the state of the limited autonomy it has exercised since 1948. In the weeks prior, the Indian government had dispatched upwards of 40,000 troops to the Kashmir Valley to beef up the 500,000 already there, including the Central Reserve Police Force. The oppressed Kashmiri Muslims, who are overwhelmingly concentrated in the Valley, live under relentless subjugation by this massive occupying army in one of the world's most militarized zones.

For over a week, the Kashmir Valley and its main city, Srinagar, have been under complete lockdown and isolation, with cell phone and internet communications cut off. Despite a virtual news blackout, reports have emerged of troops blasting people with shotgun pellets and using tear gas against protesters who courageously defied the curfew. Untold numbers of Kashmiri Muslims have been arrested and detained, including prominent politicians. *Free all victims of Indian repression in Kashmir!*

As Leninists, the International Communist League stands for the right of self-determination for Kashmir, and that includes independence. Since 1989, the Indian military has slaughtered well over 80,000 Kashmiris and subjected the population to unending terror. This includes some 8,000 "enforced disappearances," as Kashmiris call them, in which the state denies all knowledge of the victims' whereabouts. The army has a track record of heinous atrocities, including mass rapes. We unequivocally demand: *All Indian troops out of the Kashmir Valley!*

We also oppose the abrogation of Articles 370 and 35a, which codified the limited autonomy of the state of Jammu and Kashmir. These articles included a provision preventing the sale of land to non-Kashmiri residents and one determining who is a permanent resident. Those articles enabled the state to control its borders and prevent the forcible displacement of Muslims. Scrapping the measures, which Modi had long promised to do, is intended to open the floodgates for Israeli-style settlement of the Valley by Hindu-Brahmin Pandits, undoubtedly to be accompanied by stepped-up murderous communal violence against Muslims.

The Modi government's latest assault on Kashmir has fueled tensions with Pakistan, against which India has already fought three wars for control of the territory. Fanning the flames of Hindu-Muslim communalism, the hostility between the two countries is the poisonous legacy of British colonial divide-and-rule, which culminated in the 1947 Partition of the Indian subcontinent and its mass-scale communal slaughter. In the aftermath of Partition, one-

third of Kashmir went to Pakistan. Almost all of the remainder, including the Kashmir Valley, the heavily Hindu Jammu district and the Buddhist Ladakh area, went to India, which offered the carrot of autonomy along with its military boot.

Capitalist rule in India, under both Congress-led governments and Modi's Bharatiya Janata Party, has been based on Hindu-chauvinist, upper-caste supremacy, including violent repression of Kashmir, its only Muslim-majority state. Like India, Pakistan is a "prison house of peoples," with Punjabis dominating oppressed nationalities such as the Baloch. Women are brutally oppressed throughout the region. Both India and Pakistan are dependent on imperialist powers, with the U.S., Britain and other advanced capitalist countries reaping vast profits from exploiting the working masses in South Asia and elsewhere around the world.

The way out of the enormous injustices heaped upon Kashmir lies in forging a proletarian vanguard party in India that links struggles for national liberation with the revolutionary fight of the working class against capitalist exploitation. Heavily composed of and led by Dalits, women, national and ethnic minorities and others from specially oppressed layers, such a party would imbue the proletariat with the understanding that the struggle against all forms of oppression, not least caste oppression, is in the interest of the entire working class. The ICL seeks to build Leninist-Trotskyist parties, as sections of a reformed Fourth International, that are dedicated to proletarian revolution from India and Pakistan to the imperialist centers.

— International Secretariat of the International Communist League (Fourth Internationalist), 14 August 2019

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